*"It [Drama] provides a bridge between the unfamiliar world of concepts and data and the recognisable world of human experiences and endeavours."*
*(Jonothan Neelands in Learning Through Imagined Experience, 1992)*

**University of Alberta**

# The New Language Art, Representing: Process Drama as Literacy's New Best Friend?

by

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requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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This is dedicated to all *my* best friends who always believed in me, especially my husband, sister, and mom without whom this thesis would not have been completed.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this participatory action research study was to explore the use of Process Drama in English Language Arts classrooms. It originated from the introduction of the Alberta English Language Arts Program of Studies in 1998, in which drama/mime were included as a part of the sixth language art, Representing, as well as the researcher's use of Process Drama in her own classrooms, and her interest in the history of the connections between the Language Arts.

Four teachers implemented Process Drama techniques in various ways. Multiple data collection ensured that not only did the process inform the pedagogical practice of the teachers involved, but also informed the Program of Studies. The results indicated a need for professional development opportunities and pre-service teacher training in drama for teachers of English Language Arts. The data showed that drama is more that just a small part of representing as it connects the six language arts and plays a significant role in literacy.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## *Background of the Problem*

In September 1998, the new Program of Studies for English Language Arts Kindergarten to Grade 9 was introduced. This document was a product of the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. This group was formed by Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories in 1993. Nunavut joined in 2000, and the group is now known as the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education (Western and Northern, 2005, par. 1). In the 1987 Alberta Curriculum Guide, there are five strands of language: *speaking, listening, viewing, reading*, and *writing*. In the 1998 document, there are no longer five strands of language, rather six language arts, which are the same as the strands in 1987 with the addition of *representing*. In the current curriculum document, composed subsequently, Representing is described as: "Representing enables students to communicate information and ideas through a variety of media, such as video presentations, posters, diagrams, charts, symbols, visual art, drama, mime, and models" (Alberta learning, 2000, p. 3). Listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and representing are grouped as related pairs, with drama and mime included as a small part of representing.

While there is a long history of teaching the language arts separately, particularly reading and writing, the 1987, 1998, and 2000 Alberta Education Documents stress that the language arts are interrelated and that language arts pedagogy should adopt an integrated approach. This study contends that far from being merely a small part of representing, drama has the potential to connect all the language arts in order to facilitate that integration. In Neeland's (1992) book, *Learning Through Imagined Experience*, he explains why drama is an important enhancement of classroom learning, "It [Drama] provides a bridge between the unfamiliar world of concepts and data and the recognisable world of human experiences and endeavours" (p. 8). In fact, the inclusion of drama in

English Language Arts classrooms may broaden the concept of literacy itself.

***Purpose of the Study***

Over the last 30 years, drama has been considered both an art form and a learning medium (O'Neil, 1976; Stewig, 1983; and Neelands, 1992), which teachers have employed in the teaching of subjects across the curriculum. In the most recent language arts program of studies, drama has been validated as a necessary part of language learning. While recognizing its instructional value, many language arts teachers do not have any formal education in drama, and, therefore, some are hesitant or unsure of how to use drama to its full potential. Thus, there will be a need in the next few years to extend teacher education programs and provide professional development opportunities to practicing teachers to help them implement drama and mime into their language arts classrooms.

Using a participatory action research model (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982), a group of teachers and I used a number of Process Drama (O'Neil, 1995) techniques to teach language arts with the intent of informing, and possibly improving, pedagogical practice of the action research team and those who read our findings or attend our workshops. It is anticipated that this study will help inform the English Language Arts (E.L.A.) Program of Studies as well.

The primary purpose of the study was to explore how the members of the action research team could implement the drama component of representing in Grade 6-9 E.L.A. classrooms. From participants' stories of implementation, I hoped to gain insight on how Process Drama could be used by teachers with little or no prior drama experience, what techniques worked for participants, and whether participants would begin to find their own ways to use Process Drama. Furthermore, I anticipated the opportunity to discover further links between the language arts and between drama and literacy, which could guide further research in that area.

***Defining Key Terms***

For the purposes of this paper, several key terms need to be clarified. All the definitions below are for the context of this thesis. Professionals in drama education are notorious for having several terms for the same idea. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, I use the same terms throughout.

**Drama**: a collaborative or individual process of creating roles and/ or experiences that are unscripted, require no technical elements, and need not be shared with an audience.

**Process Drama:** "is a complex dramatic encounter [which] evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence. Process Drama proceeds without a script, its outcome is unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience, and the experience is impossible to replicate exactly" (O'Neill, 1995, p. xiii).

**Role-playing/ Roleplay:** "the basic ability to project into a variety of fictional situations by pretending to be someone or something other than oneself" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 78).

**Spotlighting**: drawing attention to a person.

**Theatre**: a collaborative art form that requires many individuals to bring a script to life on stage with the help of technical elements such as costumes, sets, properties, lighting and sound to create a final product to be shown to an audience.

***Question and Sub questions***

The central question of this study is: How can the drama component of representing, the sixth language art as defined by the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, be implemented in Grade 6-9 E.L.A. classrooms, with the intent of informing pedagogical practice?

I began my first research team meeting with the following sub questions to facilitate the planning of the first action research spiral, or iteration, to best suit the participants' needs and backgrounds:

1. Do teachers in the research group feel confident about using drama in their E.L.A. classrooms?

    -What supports are currently in place to allow this to happen?

        -Do participants feel administration supports their use of drama in the E.L.A. classroom?

    -What are the teacher participants' histories in teaching and drama?

2. How do you define literacy? (This question was asked after each spiral.)

    -What role, if any, do you believe drama plays/ can play in literacy? (This question was only asked after the final spiral and the final individual interviews.)

Some additional sub-questions that arose through the action research spirals were:

3. What classroom management techniques would be required when using drama in the English Language Arts classroom?

4. What are the teacher's stories of implementation and how does the Action Research program support their ongoing work?

5. How does their implementation inform their own practice and that of the group, and in turn inform the original curriculum document?

***Delimitations and Limitations***

The boundaries of the study are fairly specific, yet the content of it should be applicable to other similar educational settings. The research was completed with a group of four Language Arts teachers (including the writer) at an urban Junior High school that houses students from Grades 6 to 9. Thus, the study was restricted to students of these grades in Language Arts classes, although the pedagogical methods used may apply to other grade levels and/ or disciplines.

Although the research was conducted in classrooms, it focused on the experiences of teacher participants and their perceptions of students' reactions to learning through Process Drama (and how the study would inform their own practice) rather than the students' own experiences and perceptions. The study was not meant to collect quantitative data on student's academic success rates when Process Drama was used or on student reactions to the use of Process Drama in Language Arts classes. Teacher participants, however, as one might expect, did consider student success and reactions (and/ or teacher perceptions of such success or reactions) when reflecting upon the use of Process Drama in their classrooms.

The active research phase was the 2001/2002 school year. However, because the focus was on the teachers involved and the changing of pedagogical practice, teacher participants were interviewed again in 2003 to ascertain if their work on the Action Research team had indeed changed their pedagogical practice.

***Confounding Factors***

Uncontrolled factors and unanticipated events tend to occur, and these may have a profound effect on research that takes place over a protracted time. Since the research began, the researcher suffered a back injury from motor vehicle collisions and three of the four participants (including the researcher) have given birth. While the participants continued in the research, the process was delayed and interrupted. In other words, life sometimes presents obstacles to even the best-planned research studies!

***Significance of the Study***

At the very least, this study has informed the practice of the members of the research team, including the researcher. Moreover, it has the possibility of being informative for other E.L.A. teachers who want to implement the drama/mime component of the representing stream, but are unsure of where or how to begin. It may even give teachers in other subject areas ideas for their teaching. Hopefully, teachers reading this thesis can learn from our triumphs as well as our challenges. This study should help

make it easier for teachers to use drama in their classrooms. I have written the results of the study so that it is accessible for teachers, and explains basic techniques in such a way that they can be applied to any literature that teachers have available to them. By describing techniques in general terms rather than linking them to literature used by participants, I hoped to make the study more practical for teachers.

Additionally, this study has the potential to enlighten those who teach drama and English language arts, and most particularly, those who wish to integrate the two. Moreover, it may have some impact on teacher education programs in highlighting the need for beginning language arts teachers to learn some of the theory behind and practice of implementing the drama component of the sixth language art, representing. Additionally, it shows the need for professional development opportunities for practicing teachers of Language Arts who are not yet gaining for their students the full benefits of the drama component of representing. Prior to beginning the study, I wondered whether it would reveal connections between the language arts as well, while further exploring the place of Process Drama in the development of literate people.

***A Study is Born***

The seeds of curiosity for this study were planted before I even became a student of the Faculty of Education. I had finished my first degree, and was taking a year of all drama courses as a special student. I was also the young children's drama specialist at Stage Polaris Academy of Drama. I enjoyed doing theatre with young people so much that I planned to go to the University of Greensboro in North Carolina and take a Masters in Theatre for Young Audiences. During this time, a friend who was studying Education at the University of Alberta invited me to a meeting for a new acting group under the direction of the new Drama Education professor, Dr. Joe Norris. As a drama student, I was always looking for more acting opportunities, and my interest was Theatre for Young Audiences, so this group seemed perfect for me. That meeting changed the course of my life, and led me to doing this study.

The next year, instead of going to Greensboro, I enrolled in the after degree program in Education. That acting group I joined the year before introduced me to process drama and collective creation, and I was hooked. The group produced many shows under various names, but eventually it became Mirror Theatre, and I am a founding member of the Mirror Theatre Society. When we toured our shows to schools in Edmonton and area, I saw the power of process drama firsthand. We toured a show on bullying, called "What's the Fine Line?" (Mirror Theatre, 1997) and after the show each actor would debrief the show with a small group of teens and then have the teens add their opinions and reactions dramatically. This experience showed me how deeply students understood the issues when they explored them through process drama rather than just talking. I knew then that process drama would have a place in my classroom someday.

I graduated from Education when there were few jobs to be had. I could not seem to find a drama job, so I took a job teaching everything imaginable in a rural community. They allowed me to teach one Drama 7 class because that was my specialty, but I did not confine the drama to that class. I used process drama in my Language Arts, Health and Social Studies classes. To introduce the Japan unit in Social Studies 7, I came dressed in a traditional Japanese outfit and used teacher- in-role to introduce them to the people and culture of the country. I believed that if the students interviewed me in role, they would be interested in the unit and retain the introductory information better. The lesson went well and the unit was a success. The other teachers teased me saying things such as, "You crazy drama teachers – always showing us regular teachers up with your creative ideas!" I did not let the comments bother me, but they became more significant to me later on. Recently, I ran into a former student from that Social Studies class. She is now an adult, but when I saw her again after many years, she told me how much she enjoyed that lesson and that she remembered it all those years. That incident is a testament to the power of drama as a teaching tool.

Despite any teasing I might elicit from my new colleagues, I continued to make use of process drama in my next teaching job. I used it to clarify challenging novels, short stories, and Shakespeare's plays in English 10, 10AP, 23, and 33 classes. The methods continued to work well, and I could not imagine teaching without them.

In the summer of 1997, I had the great fortune of taking a masters level summer course entitled International Studies in Process Drama with one of the leading minds in the field, Dr. Jonothan Neelands. The course was invaluable, and made me realize that I wanted to take a Master of Education Degree once I had some more classroom teaching experience.

In January of 1999, I was admitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research to take a Master of Education Degree in Secondary Education. Later that year, in September, I began teaching in the school that would become my future research site. Through my University courses, I began to become interested in the reading-writing connection and the part drama played in it. Soon, I discovered Action Research. It was all starting to become clear. Through my courses, class discussions, papers, and so on, I realized that what I was doing with process drama in my classrooms all along was quite unique and worth sharing with others. Furthermore, I realized that my use of drama in E.L.A. classes, and my interest in the connection between the Language Arts, were also connected. When I remembered my former colleagues' taunts, I decided that it was up to me to prove that anyone, not just "crazy drama teachers" could use Process Drama as a tool in their classrooms. Somehow, my interests combined to bring this study into being.

## CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

### *Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Design*

The rationale for the use of qualitative design for this research was due to the nature of the study itself. The research question could not be answered quantitatively because it sought to understand a process rather than trying to establish causality as a quantitative study might. This topic needed to be explored in actual classrooms with teachers and students in order to inform and improve pedagogical practice and learning in those classrooms. From the research groups' lived experiences, it is hoped that other teachers may benefit.

### *The Type of Design Used*

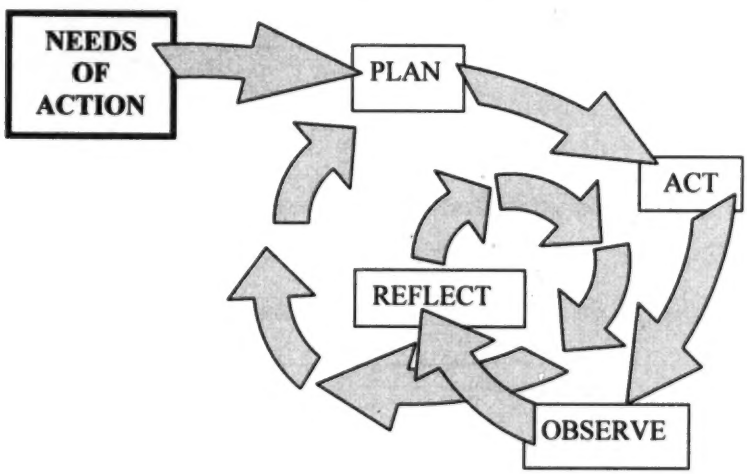
Participatory action research, therefore, was used for this study. Action research is defined as, "Inquiry-based research conducted by teachers that follows a process of examining existing practices, implementing new practices, and evaluation the results, leading to an improvement cycle that benefits both students and teachers. Synonyms include practitioner research and teacher research" (*Language and technology*, 2005). McNiff's (2005) online handbook on Action Research clarifies the idea that the researcher studies his/her own practice as follows: "Because action research is done by you, the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice" (p. 1). Action Research suits teachers well because it helps them improve praxis (a combination of theory and practice). Action research, then, is appropriate for practicing teachers to engage in as it "is the way groups of people can organise the conditions under which they can learn from their own experience and make this experience accessible to others" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 7). That is exactly what I seek to do: empower teachers to learn from the experience of using process drama in their classrooms, reflecting on that experience, and disseminating our findings so that others may benefit from our shared experiences.

When I try something new in my own classroom, my first instinct is to debrief it in my head. I ask myself questions including: "Which parts of that lesson worked well, and which parts need improvement? How can I improve it? Are learning outcomes being met? Does this lesson encourage success from all types of learners? Then, I often share my thoughts about the lesson with another teacher to gain another professional opinion. Many teachers' natural propensity to reflect on and discuss lessons is what makes action research a viable tool for use with educators. McNiff (1998) states that in action research "personal experience that can be meaningfully shared by a number of people is seen as a good basis for establishing validity" (p. 24). Having each member of the research team debrief their lessons in journal format, and in conversation with the whole group, on each action spiral (each action spira introduced new process drama strategies into the classrooms), helped prevent me from seeing only the results I wanted to see. This reflection by the other participants after each action spiral, and before I shared new information with them, gave me a more accurate picture of their own debriefing. This was meant to help me avoid leading the participants towards my own predisposition (gained from my previous experience) in favour of process drama.

Two of my goals in this study are first, to show that teachers who are not drama specialists can experience the excitement of using process drama in their classrooms, and second, to thereby increase the number of teachers who are aware of and/or using the methods. In other words, I hope that reading and applying what has been discovered will inform teachers' pedagogical practice beyond the scope of this study. Action research, therefore, is an appropriate way to meet these goals as it was developed as a means to bring about change. Kemmis quotes Collier, a founder of action research between 1933 and 1945, as follows: "I have stated our intent, that research should be evoked by needs of action, should be integrative of many disciplines, should involve the administrator and the layman, and should feed itself into action" (1981/1988, p. 30). The "needs of action" were that the new curriculum document for English Language Arts had to be

implemented, including the drama/ mime portion of the representing Language Art. The study involved an "administrator", the researcher, as well as "laymen" and women in the form of teacher and student participants. The research led to action and that action in turn fed the research as participants reflected and discussed. In other words, participants experienced a series of action research spirals, in which they planned, acted, observed, and reflected on the use of Process Drama in their classrooms. As will be made clear in discussing the results of this study, proceeding through several iterations of the action spiral brought about change in the participants' classrooms. The participants have gone on to pass their excitement for and knowledge of process drama to their colleagues. (See Fig. 1)

Graphic Representation of Action Research Spirals (Figure 1)




As a result of my study, then, there will be more teachers who feel comfortable using the drama component of representing in their language arts classrooms, and who will then be able to help colleagues change, and possibly improve, their pedagogical practice as well. Moreover, when my research is disseminated, it will provide exemplars of theory and practice in this growing area.

An action research project, then, must start with a group of people who share similar values and wish to work together to achieve praxis and "find out how to do [their] job[s] better" (Corey, 1981/1988, p. 63). My three participants and I are all people who love to learn, and who strive to improve their teaching with each successive lesson. Each participant liked the idea of being an active participant in the study rather than just being observed by me for a case study. They welcomed a chance to learn something new to use in their classes.

In order for the participants to learn as much as possible, a plan was needed. However, an action research plan should be "flexible enough to adapt to unforeseen effects and previously unrecognised constraints" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 7). Thus, we planned before each action research spiral. Our plans had to be very flexible because we were all teaching different grade levels, using different literature, and teaching units in different orders! So, each planning session had to address whatever type of unit each teacher was about to teach. This actually worked better in some ways than planning for all participants to do the same activity at the same time, because then each teacher had the other teacher's activities in their heads as well as their own, and could use them when they worked for their unit. This meant they did not have to wait until the next planning session to obtain a new process drama technique. This worked well for Participant B who became pregnant and had to stop teaching before the end of the year. Because of the flexibility of the planning, she was able to try more techniques before her maternity leave. The flexible nature of the planning enabled us to excuse her from the group meeting we had around the time she was giving birth to her son – a blessed but "unforeseen effect"!

Additionally, an action research plan should "allow the practitioner to act more effectively…and help the practitioner to realise a new potential for education action" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 8). For instance, at the beginning of the study, the participants were concerned about how to evaluate process drama. Therefore, the plan included ways to evaluate techniques discussed. Once the teachers felt comfortable knowing they could evaluate the techniques, they felt they were able to act more effectively and saw a new potential to grade students beyond pencil and paper tasks.

Once the flexible plan for each spiral was agreed upon, the action could begin. One does not suddenly change one's practice completely, as Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) assert: Action research is meant to be a "careful and thoughtful variation of practice" which is "retroactively guided by planning in the sense that it looks back to planning for its rationale" (p. 8). Our action had to be observed and documented as it happened because it "provide[ed] a basis for reflection at the time, but especially in the future." Because the plan was flexible, observing the action that arose from that plan had to "be responsive and open-minded" as well. When it was time to reflect on the action, the observation conversations we had during group meetings were invaluable. Reflection "seeks to make sense of processes, problems, issues, and constraints made manifest in strategic action." Discussion among participants was crucial here, as the first spiral of action caused participants to view the educational situation in a new light. Moreover, discussion was needed when reworking the plan for the next spiral (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 9).. "Action research was (and is) an expression of an essentially democratic spirit in social research" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 30), and our action research team exemplified this democratic spirit. Our discussions included each

participant's opinions, and, therefore, often became quite insightful as ideas were shared and built upon by other group members.

***Role of the Researcher***

In this study, the researcher was not only a participant observer, but the facilitator of the Action Research study. Thus, I used the proposed process drama methods with my own classes and reflected on them just as the other participants did. However, as the drama specialist in the group, I also served as the resource person from whom to learn background, theory, and techniques.

***Selection and Description of the Site and Participants***

As a practicing teacher in a city Junior High school with approximately 600 students, I was in an ideal situation to complete my research. The research site is a multi-track school with French Immersion, LOGOS (Christian alternative program within the public system), regular programs, and several programs for exceptional students at both ends of the spectrum. It is a dynamic place for teaching and learning with a dedicated and inventive staff.

The staff reflected the leadership of my principal who was very encouraging of innovative teaching styles and a supporter of teachers engaging in action research. Therefore, he allowed me to offer a place on the research team to all the Language Arts teachers on staff. In addition to myself, I wanted at least three other teachers; I was successful in engaging three such volunteers. On my staff at that time, all the Language Arts teachers were female. Because of my teaching schedule, I was restricted to my own school for the participants. However, I do not believe that the results would have been any different had I been able to recruit male participants as the use of process drama in

English Language Arts is not a gender specific skill.

**Participant A** has been teaching since 1981 with some breaks in between to have three children. She taught for three years in Senior High and the rest at the Junior High level, and her areas of specialization are English Language Arts and Social Studies. Her main background in drama is that of an enthusiastic audience member for many plays, although she has attended a few drama workshops. In her own words, she is "...dramatic in the way [she] present[s] herself" (Meeting 1, p. 5).

**Participant B** had been teaching at the Junior High level for three years when the study began. Her main teaching focus was and still is Visual Arts, but she was also teaches Language Arts. Of the three participants other than the researcher, she had the most prior experience with drama. She had taught some Drama the year before I had been hired as a drama specialist for the school and had experimented with drama at University.

**Participant C** was a first year teacher in her first job when the study began. Her assignment was part-time, and her main subjects were Language Arts and Social Studies. She had not had any experience with drama since she was a student herself when she had taken Grade 8 Drama. Although she mentioned that she had performing experience in a girls' band, she was fairly clear that she did not consider herself a dramatic person.

These participants were very enthusiastic, open to new ideas, and supportive of each other; this was truly a collaborative study. The degree to which our thoughts were aligned was quite remarkable. The entire process was very harmonious, and I am grateful for their participation.

Classes used for the study included the following: Grade 6 French Immersion

E.L.A, Grade 7 Academic challenge, two Grade 7 French Immersion E.L.A., regular program Grade 7, Grade 8 LOGOS (Christian) program, and an 8/9 split Academic Challenge.

***Ethical Considerations***

All participants were informed about the study. Before beginning the study, I explained the purpose and nature of my research to each participant both verbally and in an introductory letter (Appendix A). Then, I asked each teacher participant to fill in a consent form (Appendix B) and return it before any planning could commence. I verbally reiterated the fact that participants could withdraw from the research at any time throughout the study. Once the participants returned their forms, they chose which classes they were going to use and distributed introductory letters (Appendix C) and permission slips (Appendix D) to each student involved. Students were also given the ability to opt out of activities that were to be used for the study, but no one chose to do so.

Ongoing access to the data was and is limited to my university advisors and I. Participants did not see each other's journals. All participants were given transcriptions of group meetings to verify. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office for five years after the thesis is completed at which time it will be destroyed.

There is no threat or harm to the participants or others in this study. The purpose of the study is to give teachers support and ideas in implementing the drama/ mime component of the sixth language art, *representing*. The risk of harm is similar to the risk of harm if these same teachers attended a professional development workshop, tried the ideas, reflected on what happened, and discussed the results with peers who attended the

same workshop. Just as many professional development workshops do, the study is meant to inform, and possibly improve, pedagogical practice of the participants.

Threat/ possible harm to student participants is also minimal in this study, as we will be following the new Program of Studies, which has been approved by ministers of education in four western provinces and two territories. There is no more risk involved than the risk of being in a day-to-day classroom situation. Finally, there will be no harm to others in the schools. Conversely, they may benefit from the study indirectly.

***Data Collection Procedures and Method for Verification***

Data was collected through a diary/journal of my personal reflections, as well as diaries/ journals of other members of the research team. Diaries/ journals are particularly useful in action research because they allow the researcher(s) to "remain open to new and changing impressions of what is happening, but at the same time create a history of events and [their] changing perspective on them" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 26-27). However, one problem with the journals for busy teachers is that it is just one more chore they have to do – one more piece of paperwork in an already overloaded pile. One participant's journals were not completely finished due to extenuating circumstances, so that potential data was lost. The atmosphere on the research team was one of collaboration and collegiality, so we simply respected each other as professionals who were doing all that they could. I did not feel it was in the best interest of the study for one individual to force matters. Whatever I received became my data. The journal entries still gave me a record of the participant's histories using Process Drama in their classrooms.

Participants asked for guidelines for the journals, and what we discussed is as

follows. Team members were asked to record how they felt about implementing the drama technique; were they comfortable with it, and why or why not. They were also asked to discuss whether the concepts to be taught were enhanced by the use of drama, their observations/ perceptions of students' reactions to the lesson, whether they would use the technique again, and, if so, if they would change anything the next time they used it. It was also mentioned that they should add any other reflections they had about any aspect of their work with drama or the study. Yet, the journals did not always yield the depth of thought I would have expected judging from the amazing discussion at our group meetings. If I were to replicate this study, I would draw up a form to be filled out after each new technique was used. I think teachers would have felt more comfortable with more direction in this area, and, given prompts to respond to in writing rather than the pressure of starting with a blank page would likely have given me more detailed, deeper reflections.

Group meetings were held after each spiral, and some very detailed, in-depth discussion happened there. I did an initial group interview with the research team to discuss their backgrounds, classes they planned to use, and to answer my first and second sub questions as written earlier in this thesis.

In general, we used the meetings to plan, discuss our action and observations of that action, and reflect on all work as a group. During the reflection period of each action spiral (plan, act, observe, reflect), participants reflected orally as a group so as to keep the project honest, and prevent it from becoming a self-indulgent process. Also, when unexpected happenings arose during a research spiral, discussion clarified them and turned them into questions for future spirals. As the team shared ideas and experiences,

issues often became clearer. Moreover, it was useful for the team members to receive moral support from other participants (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982, p. 13). These meetings were audio taped and later transcribed, coded, analyzed and given to team members for verification when the final interviews took place.

We planned to have full group meetings after each spiral, but due to the busy schedules of teacher participants, only one of those meetings had all members of the action research team present. Because I did not want to miss the meetings after any action research spiral for fear valuable data would be forgotten, I held the meetings with the team members who could come to the scheduled meeting, and scheduled a special meeting with whoever was missing. In some ways, this strengthened the data. The participants tended to agree with one another when together, but when I met with participants alone, I was really able to question them further and gain deeper insights. Conversely, participants missed hearing important discussion and/or planning that went on in the meeting they missed. I tried to reiterate for the missing members, but that is not the same as hearing it firsthand. However, in the spirit of the changing nature of Action Research, participants ended up having informal one-on -one meetings with me and each other as the study progressed, which enhanced the feeling of teamwork and made up for any information gaps that might have existed otherwise.

I wondered if my participants' pedagogical practices were *really* changed, or if they were just changed for the duration of the study. Due to a couple of ill-timed motor vehicle collisions that resulted in back injuries and a fairly lengthy recovery time, I was unable to finish my analysis and writing as quickly as I had hoped. However, it proved to be fortuitous to the value of the study, because I was then able to include a longitudinal

aspect to the study. I interviewed each teacher participant one year after the active research period (Appendix E). These interviews were audio taped and transcribed as well, giving me a new wealth of data from which to learn.

Other methods of data collection, such as videotaping the teachers while using the process drama techniques and interviewing or surveying students were not used because I felt they would detract from the study. For instance, if we were to videotape interview, or survey the students, it could raise serious privacy issues for some parents. Moreover, these actions would have created the feeling that the students and their reactions are the crux of the study, which is misleading. Finally, teachers are less likely to present a new type of lesson in a relaxed, confident manner (which is crucial when teaching with drama) when they are being videotaped. In other words, in order for us to truly test the teachers' ability to implement the drama/ mime component of representing, and gauge their comfort levels, we had to keep the classroom environment as normal as possible.

Further to that goal, and to nurture the very productive feelings of collegiality within the group, I did not observe the other teachers delivering their process drama lessons. I felt that as professionals, my participants could be participant-observers just as I was in my own classroom. I strongly believe in the concept of team in action research, and believe that is what prompted already overworked teachers to join my study. While I was the expert on the drama techniques, we were all equal as teachers and professionals, and my observing them would have suggested I felt otherwise.

When I began my work, my advisor was Dr. Joe Norris, and when he left, I was paired with Dr. George Buck. These two men in turn have been my "critical friends" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 22) throughout the study as a further check that the

integrity of the study and its participants is being preserved.

I expected a large amount of data to be produced, and that some of it would be repetitive. Yet, in a large volume of data collected in different ways, there is more room for discovery; this, to me, is the excitement of action research. Therefore, I heeded the caution of McNiff and Kemmis and McTaggart to be systematic in data collection. McNiff (1998) explains, "Part of being systematic involves collecting data so that you can pinpoint where your evaluation of your action has led to new insights about your practice. [Action research must be] as comprehensive as possible because many important insights come after the event, as you try to make sense of the data you have collected" (p. 18-19). Also, because the research question(s) are continuously reformulated as the cycle spirals on, it was difficult to predict during the process what would become crucial or useless upon further action and reflection. It is fairly easy to agree with McNiff, Kemmis, and McTaggart on the rigor needed in data collection because one's initial action plan may not yield all the information needed. The second, third and subsequent spirals can then help you discover more and more about your research questions. Not only that, what you learned about your assumptions and misconceptions about students and/or learning in the unexpected results could be very valuable. If you expected to achieve your goals after one spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection, there would be no point in using action research.

If others hope to replicate this study, there are a few procedural items I would consider changing. Because I was working with other professionals, I did not want to inconvenience them by changing their regular routines in any other way than adding Process Drama to their lessons. I also wanted our process to be collaborative rather than

directive in nature.

First, when we began the active research phase of the study, most of the participants were working on Grammar, which does not lend itself as easily to using process drama techniques, as does the study of Literature. Although there were advantages to allowing participants to adhere to their original year plans, it might have been easier for all of us had I done a year plan with them so that we were all doing the same units at the same time. Then we could have taught the bulk of the grammar concepts before the active research phase began. It would have been much easier had everyone been doing, for example, short stories at the same time. Then, at the group meetings, we would not have had to worry about talking about one person's unit for too long, and we may have been able to introduce even more Process drama techniques. I did, however want teachers to begin making up their own ways to use drama in their lessons, so I still would not have wanted to give them too much direction and stifle their natural instincts and creativity that surfaced when they understood some of the theory behind process drama and some basic methods.

Additionally, a common year plan and an introduction of each technique to be used at the same time as the other teachers may have ensured that each teacher tried all the techniques with all her classes. In other words, had I played my role as the expert in a stronger manner I may have gained even more valuable data. For instance, one participant was reluctant to try the technique of physically representing a poem with one of her two classes because the first one was "...more open...more dramatic, and they're more into doing movement..." (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 3). Had I insisted all techniques be used with each class at least once, that teacher's confidence in herself and

process drama may have grown even more than it did, and I would have gained insight into how a so-called quiet class reacted to a more difficult Process Drama procedure.

Moreover, after analyzing the data I realized that certain teacher participants would have liked even more direction from me at times rather than being insulted by that as I imagined.

In conclusion, I would encourage those replicating this study to encourage participants to try all techniques, and to not be afraid to be the expert if that is part of your role in the research. Whether or not to have a common year plan is a decision that future researchers should weigh carefully. Having teachers begin work from where they were in their own units, allowed greater flexibility, and encouraged more sharing amongst participants. It also ensured that more techniques were introduced at once. On the other hand, having a common year plan and having each participant use the same techniques at the same times, would make analysis of the data much easier for the researcher. Either method would be effective.

***Presentation of the Study***

Analysis and dissemination procedures for action research are less obvious than for other research methods. It is not a matter of graphing statistics, tabulating surveys, and writing a scholarly journal article or conference paper. Both analysis and dissemination should take place during and after the research.

In other words, analysis should take place by individual participants and the whole group after and during each spiral in the action research process. That was the purpose of the journals, group meetings, and final interviews; we orally analyzed the process as it unfolded, and preserved the conversations on audiotapes. After each group meeting, we

used the knowledge we gained from this oral analysis to plan the next AR spiral.

In order to continue data analysis, the audiotapes were then transcribed. During the final analysis, I read all the transcriptions (both group meetings and final one-on-one interviews) and journal entries for themes and key points which I recorded as I read. Second, I collated related data such as each participant's answers to the same questions throughout the study and especially in the final interviews so that comparing and contrasting the answers would yield more information. I also collated data on particular techniques. Then, I analyzed the data in terms of each AR spiral, in order to see each spiral as a whole. Next, I brought all the definitions of Literacy together for each participant, so I could see if/ how their thinking changed/ developed in this area. I also made a list of all the process drama techniques teachers actually used and any techniques they modified in their own ways. Then I studied the journal entries specifically for the teacher's reactions to each technique. Finally, I made a chart listing all the techniques used by participants A to C that also showed how the participants felt about each technique, how they felt it enhanced concepts to be taught, the perceived effects on the students, and whether or not they would use the technique again. By analyzing the data in different ways, I gained the most information possible from the data.

Dissemination of action research data and findings is not necessarily a scholarly paper in the traditional sense, and the research does not have to be kept to oneself until the whole process is over. We regularly shared our findings with other staff members of our school and the district. Now that the study is concluded, I hope to give presentations on our findings and lead workshops using successful Process Drama techniques as a dissemination technique that I can be sure will reach at least some teachers. Teacher

participants suggested I present at Professional Development days and teacher conventions so that more people can benefit from our experiences. One participant suggested that I should write a practical handbook using approved resources for teachers wishing to use Process Drama in Language Arts classes. I can also see the benefits of presenting our findings to pre-service teachers whose major or minor specializations are English Language Arts. Of course, to thank my school board for their cooperation, I will offer to do a presentation or workshop for them for allowing me to complete my study in one of their schools. Even though action research does not require an academic paper at its conclusion, this particular study is my Master of Education Thesis.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) suggest that action researchers "…sort out what [their] data and impressions mean [and to] communicate what [they] have learned" (p. 35) after each spiral. Because action research can be a long process with many spirals, this will help the researcher(s) gain more from each section of the process and from the process as a whole. I agree with this. Having formal group meetings after each AR spiral to orally analyze the data was invaluable.

McNiff (1998) provides both insight into, and many practical suggestions about, analysis and dissemination of action research. Interestingly, McNiff likens dissemination to representing the research. First, she claims that action research should be distributed as publicly as possible, partially because a lack of readily available, published results is a common criticism of action research. In order to make my results public within my school community, I will give a copy of the entire thesis to my board, in addition to the executive summary they require. Other potential methods of dissemination might include a journal article reporting on the research, or even a collective play about integrating

drama into language arts, which could be created by the research team to be shown to beginning teachers. The way we disseminate the research is only limited by the research team's creativity. McNiff's views about dissemination are very exciting in the possibilities they offer.

# CHAPTER 3: ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT THROUGH LITERATURE

## *Drama and Language Arts: Connections*

Historically, reading and writing were viewed as separate processes and taught as such. More recently, researchers and educators have suggested that the two are connected, and that teaching practices should reflect that relationship. The strongest connections between reading and writing seem to be made when students link what they read to their own lives and construct their own meanings for the text. Now, reading and writing are two of six, inter-related Language Arts, which include listening and speaking, viewing and representing, as well as reading and writing. Because Drama can be a very personal and effective way to construct meanings from literature, it can help students understand meaning in their own lives and in the visualized world of literature. With this deeper comprehension of the literature, students tend to be better able to respond to that literature through various forms of their own writing: "Reading and writing tend to become more unified when the center becomes something other than one of the major school subjects...." (Nelson & Calfee, 1998, p. 39). Drama could be that center. In fact, Drama is a wonderful tool to link all six of the Language Arts. Moreover, the inclusion of drama in the English Language Arts classroom may broaden the concept of literacy[1] itself.

There is a wide range of literature, both theoretical and methodological, on the reading-writing connection in education. Less has been written discussing drama as it relates to the Language Arts, but more has been written on this topic even since the start

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[1] The Merriam Webster dictionary defines Literacy as "the quality or state of being literate." When using literate as an adjective, it means, "educated, cultured [and] able to read and write"). When using literate as a noun it means, "versed in literature or creative writing; lucid, polished; [or] having knowledge or

of my research. However, there are a good variety of works linking drama with learning in general. Previous reading had been done in both areas, so readings about the reading-writing connection and the use of drama for learning were partly chosen because well-known and respected authors in each field wrote them. Additionally a selection of theoretical and practical (i.e. intended to guide teacher practice) literature was reviewed so as to gain different perspectives on the areas of interest. Nelson and Calfee's 1998 chapter The Reading-Writing Connection Viewed Historically (p. 1-52) was used as a key document for my review of the reading-writing connection literature. Their chapter is well referenced (it has 100 references) and is the best historical overview of the reading-writing connection that I found. Similarly, Ken Byron's book, *Drama in the English classroom* (1986), also served as a key resource as it supports connections between reading, writing and drama found while reading the literature.

Many links between reading and writing are discussed in the literature. Some links are stronger than others but all have contributed to recognition of the importance of linking the processes of reading and writing. Nelson and Calfee (1998) cite spelling as one of the earliest links between reading and writing in colonial times (p.3). By the end of the 1800s, writing essays on literature was a major link between reading and writing (p. 13). This link is still the most common one found in English classrooms today. The next connection Nelson and Calfee describe is the writing of research papers (p. 14). One must continually move between reading and writing in a very natural way to produce one's own text from a variety of other author's texts. By the 1970s, attention was still given to research papers, but some called them "discourse synthesis" which is a fancy

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competence <computer-*literate*>" (Merriam-Webster online). The definitions of literacy that came out of this research are found in the Definitions of Literacy section near the end of this paper.

title for summarization of literature and critiquing it. Yet, this also served to link the reading and writing processes (p. 27). Also, neo-progressive (new progressive ideas that hearken back to John Dewey and Progressive Education in terms of their emphasis on discovery learning) ideas began to surface at this time, which changed the way reading and writing were connected for students in classrooms forever. Nelson and Calfee (1998) describe these three ideas, which are Whole Language, Process Writing, and Reader Response (pp. 28-32). These people were unknowingly laying the foundations for drama in E.L.A classrooms with their integrative methods. These three ideas provide the strongest links between reading and writing, and, by extension, all the language arts. The Whole language movement began in the 1970s and "refers to a conception of language learning that emphasizes holistic aspects of language and learning" (Nelson & Calfee, 1998, p. 31). A main emphasis of this movement is to ensure that the modalities of Language Arts "develop in concert with one another…in holistic, naturalistic situations [in which] children perform communicative acts; and learning often moves from whole to part" (Nelson & Calfee, 1998, p. 31). When using drama as a tool in Language Arts, the drama creates "holistic, naturalistic situations" through which students communicate verbally and non verbally. When learning through drama, the process naturally flows from the whole (the actual drama activity) to its parts and what they mean. This will become clearer to the reader when the drama techniques are outlined later in this paper.

Process Writing is a methodology in keeping with the philosophy of Whole Language. A good example of reading and writing linked and being learned together is found in Carol Avery's (1985) article, "Lori figures it out: A young writer learns to read." Avery provided an environment for her grade one class "in which the children's

writing would be the beginning impetus and primary instrument for their instruction in learning to read" (p. 16). When the children began, their "writing" was pictures and scribbles beside which the teacher wrote her "translation." As time went on, students began to use invented spellings beside their pictures. When Avery bound the children's writing into books for the classroom, and children began to "read" their work to their peers, "syntax and semantics clues became natural allies as they deciphered their own writing" (Avery, 1985, p. 19). Students had both peer and teacher conferences about writing and reading. In other words, "publishing" the students' writing was the result of the valuable process of editing and revising through conferencing with the teacher, and, more importantly, with peers. "Through this workshop approach reading and writing were connected as students moved back and forth between roles of reader and writer" (Nelson & Calfee, 1998, p. 30).

It is this idea that learning in Language Arts is a process that is key to linking all six language arts. The entire process is why learning occurs. When students participate in Process Drama, they often begin by reading a piece of literature. Then, they plan (this step often includes some writing), create, and represent an understanding of that literature with their bodies and/ or voices. When they present their representations, everyone watching can then have his/her own "translations" of what it means. Afterwards, the class discusses what they saw to gain the most from everyone's ideas. Yet students do not just learn from the reading, preparing the drama, presenting the drama, or discussing the drama, they learn from every step in the process. As students experience the literature in this way, they must move back and forth between roles of reader, writer, speaker, listener, viewer, and those who represent.

Students also experience natural movement between the roles of reader and writer when engaged in Reader Response. Reader Response is when "the primary focus falls on the reader and the process of reading rather than on the author or the text" (McManus, 1998, First line). When the reader's response is through drama, all the language arts are needed once again. Atwell used Reading Logs, and there are many other formats for Reader Response. Drama can be another format of Reader Response. The Reader Response movement was originally about "how we can help everyone approach written language from the perspective of "insider"" (Atwell, 1985, p. 148). When students role – play characters from literature and/ or otherwise represent that literature, they immediately become an "insider" to the written text. Neelands (1992) has valuable insight on this: "In conventional reading and writing activity, fictional situations are unalterable, recorded and described; students are either fixed in the role of spectator, observer or reader, or in the role of writer." This makes it difficult for students to find "a way in" to the literature. Yet, "in drama, the same fictions may be transformed by the students' responses, and the fictions are entered into and lived as a 'here and now' experience." When students explore literature through process drama, they actually experience it, and become personally connected to it because they have been part of it. Neelands (1992) concludes his point thus: "This immediacy prompts new understandings and uses of language as a direct result of the active experiencing of the fiction" (p. 6). As long as "an integration between the whole framework of interests, ideas, and feelings which the student brings, and the structure of ideas and emotions offered by the literary work" (Rosenblatt, 1938, pp. 133/134) is present, the activity will be Reader Response.

Although Rosenblatt was not talking about drama, there are intriguing parallels

between her criteria for Reader Response and responding in dramatic form. In the written form of Reader Response, students write about literature from their own perspective, rather than from the perspective of literary analysis. In the dramatic form, students represent literature from their own perspective, which can then serve as a Reader Response in and of itself or be a catalyst for written Reader Response. Once students have experienced the literature through drama , it tends to be easier for them to feel and write like an "insider". Once a student becomes accustomed to the Reader Response process – original or dramatic-- he or she "thinks and watches the student thinking, playing both creator and critic in the game of making meaning" (Murray, 1985, p. 201).

Reader response, Process Writing, and Whole Language are methods used to link reading and writing. As aforementioned, drama can fit well into each of these methods. Yet, that is simply a researcher applying her knowledge of drama to previous methods and theories. How does drama fit into the actual history of the reading-writing connection and Language Arts? In 1986, Byron stated, "the most common use envisaged for drama in English classrooms by teachers of English and by writers on English teaching is that of 'acting out stories'." Byron argues that this is likely not the most effective use of drama if one's goal is to gain deeper understanding of a text (p. 66). He explains this as follows:

> The problem resides in the fact that if in drama we are working on a given narrative sequence whose development and outcome are already known, that tends to pull us towards concentration on 'getting the plot right', on 'what happens next', on the momentum of events and plot. We are not submitting to a dramatic experience, only representing an experience (of reading a story) we have already had; our representation will tend to be condensed and allusive, rather than elaborative as in a genuine drama mode. It is difficult to see what is added by such enactment. If teachers are to use drama to work upon

> the material in a narrative text, then it is essential that the work is geared to preserve the distinctive dynamic of drama – dwelling in *situation* rather than moving on in story. (Byron, 1986, p. 81)

Cecily O'Neill, Alan Lambert, Rosemary Linnell, and Janet Warr-Wood (1976/1977) expressed essentially the same ideas ten years earlier in *Drama Guidelines*. They, too, are concerned that mere re-enactment "may descend to a need to get the story right" (O'Neill et al., p.14). However, they do note that, "for some children, re-enactment may be an important experience – therapeutic, social or artistic, but the teacher must be aware of why he [*sic*] is asking his pupils to re-enact something" (O'Neill et al., p. 14). In a drama class, where the goal is to learn to translate story into action, re-enacting well-written literature will help students when they write their own scenes/ plays. However, in Language Arts class, the idea of using drama is not to improve students' performance skills. Rather, it is to help meet the student learner expectations of the Language Arts curriculum *through* the drama. In other words, there is a difference between drama as a tool and drama as an art form. Within the context of a Language Arts class, drama should be used primarily as the former, without completely excluding the possibility of learning from the latter.

Drama can be used as a tool to link reading and writing in many more significant ways than mere re-tellings of literature. O'Neill and her co-authors state, "Text can be a starting point for improvisation and improvisation can lead to a close study and deeper understanding of the original (O'Neill et al., 1976/ 1977, p. 70). John Warren Stewig (1983) also links reading and writing through drama as follows: "Drama both leads to and comes from creative writing. In either case, both the writing and the dramatizing benefit" (p. 108). Thus, drama can be both a response to literature and a way to more

fully understand it. Additionally, drama can inspire students to write, which can then inspire further dramatic expression.

Stewig illustrates this point with examples. He suggests that students can be led to improvise on a picture and then write down what they experienced. Next, he recommends that teachers use whatever methods possible to motivate students to write stories. When he suggests choosing some of these stories to dramatize, my fear would be that following this suggestion may be embarrassing, frightening, or inspire jealousy instead of creating the desired motivation. Stewig's example is vague, which would make it difficult for drama-shy or inexperienced teachers to use this method in the classroom. Secondly, in a classroom of today, he would likely receive many calls from parents wondering why he never chose their child's story to dramatize, and berating him for damaging each student's fragile self-esteem. This book is a good foundational document of the use of drama in Language Arts, but parts of it are outdated for practical use. This point is reinforced near the beginning of the book when Stewig tries to persuade the reader that drama should be made part of the Language Arts curriculum, along with increasing attention to oral language. Of course, this has since been done.

Stewig focused on using drama in the elementary Language Arts classroom, but it is equally useful at the opposite end of the scale – junior and/or senior high school. Byron (1986) quotes the following clever mantra: "Whereas narrative summarizes drama, drama elaborates narrative" (Moffett, 1968, cited in Byron, p.79). Thus, drama is used for elaboration on the text rather that re-enacting it. In fact, drama is a captivating way to introduce students to issues within literature and predispose them to the world of the literature to be introduced. For instance, group drama can be used to introduce

students to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare is introduced in Grade nine at the research site, and Process drama is helpful to make Shakespeare's writing more accessible. It must be noted that, for safety reasons, anyone planning to use group drama should set rules (Appendix F) before starting. The following activity works with students who have participated dramatically in E.L.A. class previously, and know the parameters. A process is as follows: divide students into two groups. Ask them to develop their own gang rituals and rules, as well as deciding on a gang name and why they are fighting with the other gang. Once the gangs have had time to feel like a group, have the gangs meet. Throughout the process, the teacher should freeze the action to have students reflect on it. That is when much of the possible learning occurs. Just as the verbal warfare is about to escalate, the teacher steps in as the Mayor of the city/town in which they live.[2] He or she decrees that there will be no more gang warfare in the city, and that anyone caught perpetuating gang warfare will be banished from the city/town forever. Next, the teacher in a new role of a reporter can interview both gangs on their reactions to the Mayor's announcement. The teacher asks questions such as: Why did you begin fighting in the first place? How long have you been fighting? Do you think you will be able to avoid fighting with them again? After the interview, students and teacher reflect on the drama. When Romeo and Juliet is introduced the students will immediately have a connection to the play. Students' experience in the drama can also be used to create their own texts if desired.

Students are often required to produce texts such as character sketches. Yet, particularly with Shakespeare's work, students find it difficult to understand the

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[2] Teacher-in-role is a trademark of Dorothy Heathcote's work.

characters and what motivates them. So, students can use drama to link what they have read to what they need to write. One example is as follows: Students work in groups to find and record all they can from the text about an assigned character. To share the information with the class, a drama technique called Hot Seats (See Findings and Implications, sub section "Techniques Used", number 5 for further information) may be used. Groups may choose one person to sit on the Hot Seat, or the group can collectively play the role of their assigned character. Then, the rest of the class asks the character on the Hot Seat questions which he/she/the group must answer as the character. The depth of understanding of character reached after this activity is substantial. After this activity, the students are better able to write about characters and their motivations.

As the previous example illustrates, drama (part of representing), reading and writing can be interrelated processes. That is because each of the processes involves constructing meaning. Writing and drama are very obviously constructive processes. For the former, meaning is constructed by the ways in which words and symbols are arranged on the page. For the latter, meaning is constructed collectively by the way words and actions are arranged on the "stage"[3]. As is illustrated later, sometimes drama does not even require words. As a reader consumes a work of fiction, he or she "engages in a private, internalized role-taking process" (Byron, 1986, p. 67) to construct his or her own meanings from the text. Drama, then, reinforces the reading process by making public what the reader understands or believes privately. Moreover, the students share the meanings they made with each other, comparing their points of view with the author's (as discerned from the text). "All drama, regardless of the material, brings to the teacher an

[3] I could not resist the rhyme. By stage, I am referring to any place where students present/ experience drama. Of course, the type of drama discussed in this paper does not require an actual stage.

opportunity to draw on past relevant experience and put it into use" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 90). Graves (1991) highlights the importance of this as follows: "The ability to examine an author's point of view in a text and understand many classmates' points of view is an essential component of the literate person" (p. 43). Because drama includes both of these, it is certainly a useful method to nurture literacy.

Booth (1998) states, "For Junior High students, learning to use language effectively requires authentic situations that promote language use" (p. 68). Drama can provide such authentic situations. Using drama as a link between reading and writing, and all the language arts, depends upon Heathcote's (1978) concept of "as if" and Neelands (1992) idea of drama as "imagined experience." Byron (1986) describes his form of these ideas thus:

> Drama and fiction are means which enable us to work on and examine our life experience at one remove, in an 'as if' or fictional context, in order to understand it a little better. We use words (in story) or words-and-actions (in drama) to represent, explore, and organize that experience.... What the English teacher tries to do is to set up what might be described as a dialogue between reader and text." (p. 68)

Byron and Neelands have their own ways of expressing these ideas. Byron sees drama as "being a representation of real experience, rather than a real experience as such" (1986, p. 78). Neelands (1992) takes the concept further as follows: "Though imaginary, the exploration [the drama] can be experienced and shared as if it were real" (Imagined, p. 3). Neelands believes "it is this 'realness' of drama, in which role-players give and receive (write and read) each other's messages simultaneously, which makes drama a unique form of literacy" (p. 6).

Because students live through imagined experiences in drama, the realness of the drama can have real effects on students. To remain literate in a world that continually

changes and stretches the definition of the word literacy, students must "use their existing experience [as well as their imagined experience] as a means of making sense of new experience/ information" (Neelands, 1984, p. 2). Neelands elaborates this point further thus: "If we give them the opportunity to build these bridges between what they already know and the new learning presented by school, we are also giving them *status* as learners and enabling them to refine their own ways of learning; we help them to learn how to learn" (p. 2). Drama, then, is a bridge or link in many ways, as well as a form of communication in its own right.

Beach's (1998) chapter about the dialogic approach to literature further illuminates drama's links with literacy. In the dialogic approach, students "also relate the conflicts and tensions evoked by the text to their own real-world experiences [and] acquire different ways of understanding and valuing their own social experiences" (p. 231). In this approach to literature, "students can write other sorts of responses that parody, mimic, extend, or recreate the text" (Beach, 1998, p. 240). This approach enhances students literacy levels because it gives their reading meaning, and gives them a chance to write about the literature in ways that mean something to them. Drama is a parallel process where students can experience responses that parody, mimic, extend, or recreate the text. Thus, drama itself is a dialogic approach to literature and, therefore, helps students become more literate.

It is fascinating to think of drama and its links to literacy. Neeland's idea that drama is a form of literacy is particularly intriguing. It is unclear, however, whether an examination of the literature or an explanation of current ways of using drama in the English Language Arts classroom have moved it completely toward that potential.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### *Researcher's Assumptions/ Pre-study Thoughts*

McNiff writes, "Action Research is open ended. It does not begin with a fixed hypothesis." She further clarifies as follows: "It begins with an idea that you develop. The research process is the developmental process of following through the idea, seeing how it goes, and continually checking whether it is in line with what you wish to happen" (McNiff, 2002, What is Action Research section, para. 3). When I began this study, I had ideas about what might happen based on my own experiences with using Process Drama in my teaching. I also had some ideas that I "wished to happen." One such wish was that the participants would not only become more and more confident using Process Drama as a teaching tool as the study progressed, but also that they would begin to use Process Drama in their Language Arts lessons without any direction from me. Once they made the techniques "their own," I also thought that they would continue using them. I wondered if participants would see drama as a link between the language arts, and if they would eventually include drama in their definitions of literacy without any prompting from me. As outlined in the following section (IV), my "wishes" generally came true, and I gained even more from the study than I ever could have guessed.

### *Participant's Assumptions*

When the study began, it was clear the participants had four main assumptions about what it would mean to use drama in their E.L.A. classrooms.

The first was as follows: *Only teachers with naturally outgoing and flamboyant personalities will be successful in integrating drama into their E.L.A. classrooms.* Participant B had thought carefully on this subject, and said this at the end of the study:

> I think that it's quite intimidating to layer that level of literacy or interpretation through drama into your class because…you feel like you have to be that zany drama teacher to do it, and in a lot of ways, you don't have to. I think the mere fact that we're teachers [means] we are performing in some sense, that we're in front of a class, and an audience…and [so] I think that we all have the capabilities to interject that notion of drama into our lessons, and it becomes …less of some sort of strange alchemy that only certain people can do.
> (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 2)

Although Participant B still thinks not everyone may be naturally brilliant at drama, she does not think that teachers should deprive their students of such a wonderful way of learning and comprehending literature because of that (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 2). Participant C is living proof that all teachers who are willing to learn the techniques and try them can experience success with them despite lack of previous knowledge, experience, or a dramatic personality.

The second supposition I discovered was as follows: *A special type of space is required for drama.* Drama can be experienced in any regular classroom. Desks may need to be moved for certain activities, but that is easily accomplished. In fact, when using other types of cooperative learning group work strategies that are common in Language Arts, most teachers have students move the desks. The types of activities we introduced in this study can be done at the front of a standard classroom just as an oral presentation would be done.

The idea that *Drama and Theatre are synonymous* was an assumption made by both teachers (and students) when told about the study. Both groups thought that drama was "acting out". The fact that I produce full-scale musicals every year at my school likely fed that fallacy. At an initial meeting, when asked to outline her previous

experience in drama, one participant mentioned some musical performing she had done implying that any performance experience was like experience in drama. (Unpublished raw data 2, p. 2). Additionally, another participant was talking about wanting to do something "more refined…'cause right now it is more of an exercise than a performance" (Unpublished raw data 1, p. 2). By the last group meeting of the active research phase, however, that same participant stated, "Kids have that perception that drama is theatre," showing that she no longer thought that way. Participants quickly found out that I was not advocating dramatizations of literature with time-consuming rehearsals and the collection of properties and costumes, rather that a special kind of drama, Process Drama, would be used as a tool to help aid understanding of literature rather than simply reproducing a live version of it.

The fourth impression participants had, which is closely related to the previous two, was that *drama takes more valuable class time than traditional teaching methods.* Of course, dramatizing a piece of literature would likely take more time than the language learning it afforded would warrant in a Language Arts class. As a drama teacher, I can vouch for the great number of useful skills students learn when producing a play, but those skills are not all related to the Language Arts curriculum!

That is not to say that there is no value in putting parts of plays, particularly Shakespeare's works, "on their feet" in English classes to deepen understanding of the language used and the plays themselves. However, such performances are more akin to Theatre, and this study is concerned with the use of Process Drama.

Yet, even once it became clear that I was not expecting full-scale productions, there still remained an impression that using process drama would be time consuming

without yielding enough learning to merit the time. However, by the middle of the active research phase, participants realized that time spent doing Process Drama was worth the time for the excellent learning opportunities it gave their students. They also discovered that some activities could actually teach concepts more quickly, and more memorably, than pen and paper tasks, as well as reduce the teacher's workload. For example, at one meeting, we discussed having students do tableaux for the main points in each chapter in a novel. This still taught students to find main ideas without having them write conventional chapter summary paragraphs. When all the students viewed the tableaux in order, it was like rereading the novel for each child. Students still learned how to pick out and recognize main points, but it took less overall class time than having each student write a summary after each chapter. An added bonus was that it also reduced the teacher's marking load, saving her personal time as well.

***Techniques Used***

There are many Process Drama techniques, but I chose to introduce five basic techniques during the study in the hope that by limiting the number of techniques that all the participants would use each technique at least once. I chose techniques that, in my experience, are versatile and work well for a variety of Language Arts lessons. Three other techniques were also discussed in the group, so they will be included briefly here. The participants modified some of these and thought of their own techniques by the end of the study, but those are discussed under the heading ***Spiral Four.*** Each of the five techniques will be defined[4], and a specific example from this study will be given so that other teachers reading this document will be able to try these methods in their

classrooms.[5] Interesting points that arose during implementation will also be discussed here. Finally, the techniques are listed in a suggested progression of execution, which will also be explained in this section.

**1. Teacher-in-Role**

Essentially, this technique is exactly what its title suggests; it is when the teacher takes on a role from which to facilitate imagined experience (Neelands, 1992) for his/her students. The role is usually one of leadership so that the teacher may guide the drama. For instance, each of us took on the role of Game show host for the Sentence Survivor (Appendix G) lesson with our own classes.

It is difficult to use Process Drama with Grammar and Mechanics, but I wanted to be able to begin introducing techniques immediately so as to have time for all techniques during the active research phase. Thus, I thought it would be a good time to introduce the concept of role in a non-threatening way. Hence, a game show came to mind, as the roles for both teacher and students do not have to be much different than their regular selves, which would ease both teachers and students into the study.

Participants thought the original game show lesson as I prepared it took too much preparation and "just got too confusing" (Unpublished raw data 3, p. 1). Yet, for me, it worked well. So, what I learned from that is as follows: when people use these techniques, they need to make them their own. That lesson was too specific, and it did not work as written for any of the other participants. Therefore, after that, I began giving

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[4] These techniques are defined in my words to reflect how I use them. Other drama specialists may have slightly different definitions or uses for these techniques. That is the joy of drama! Ten drama teachers may use the same warm up game under ten different names.

[5] More complete information on each technique is found in the Appendices. Because teachers will all have different resources and literature on hand, each method is described so that it may be used with the teachers' choices of literature.

participants the ideas; how they work; and notes or rubrics as requested. That way they could fit the techniques to their own style to meet their own lesson objectives. Participants found ways of making the game show idea work for them, and liked the concept and using it as a way of introducing role to their students. Using the Game Show format was "very helpful and entertaining when trying to review for a test. It also got the students excited to study, if only for the game, to try to outsmart their classmates" commented Participant C (Unpublished raw data 12, p. 1).

The game show idea is, in hindsight, not the best example of Teacher-in-Role, although it was good for the comfort level of the participants. A better example is described next. After reaching the climax in our novel with my Grade 6 class, I found simple costume pieces to imply each main character involved and took on the role of each character to help students compare and contrast the climax from main characters' points of view so that they could then synthesize the information into a newspaper article. Then, I had students take on the role of reporters and interview me as each character. When they wrote their articles, they could combine points of view, or favour one of the character's side of the story. Being able to interview the "characters" gives students imagined experience as reporters, which makes writing the article less of a "dummy run."

I am not sure who first taught me the notion of "dummy runs," but I have always remembered it. I remember being told that if you have students write a letter, you should have them write to a real person and actually mail their letters. I agree that, whenever possible, writing assignments should be rooted in some experience rather than just randomly assigned. However, teachers are often short of time to teach everything in the curriculum. Thus, it is not always possible or practical to provide actual experience.

Teacher-in-Role (and other process drama techniques) is an efficient means by which to provide "experience" without ever leaving the classroom.

Some teachers say, "I can't do that; I'm not an actor." While I understand their hesitation to use this technique, I would remind teachers that they answer questions and think on their feet every day. If teachers think back to their field experience and their first lesson with live students, they probably had similar fears as they do about playing a role in front of their classes. Yet, with time and practice, answering questions on the spot and improvising when necessary became a natural part of being a teacher. With practice and time, using Teacher-in-Role should also become more natural.

**2.Tableaux**

Tableaux are frozen pictures in time. They are moments cut out from the action of a story, novel, play, or other narrative piece (Appendix H). During the study, we used tableaux to help students pick out the main plot points from novels, short stories and narrative poems. After a text was finished, we placed students in small groups and assigned each group a number of chapters by dividing the number of chapters in the book by the number of groups. Then, we had students skim their chapters and pick out the three major plot points of each chapter. Next, we asked students to prepare a tableau for each plot point paying careful attention to facial expressions, body positions (not blocking other students with your body), spreading the picture out, and using different levels in the picture. In other words, the students are learning elements of composition to complete the assignment. Once the students had rehearsed their tableaux, we watched them in sequence for a review of the entire novel. After the presentations, we debrief (Appendix I) the activity to reinforce the learning. Participant A remarked, "I was impressed by the

students' concentration and attention to detail" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 1).

### 3. Figurative Physicals[6]

These are physical representations of figurative language in poetry. Depending on the difficulty of the poem, this is a great way to begin a poetry unit for Grade 8 and 9 students rather than the fairly traditional (and tedious) lesson on the figures of speech. If you choose a poem with some common figures of speech in it, the definitions will surface when the class debriefs the activity. It is also a good way to end the figures of speech lessons for Grade 6 or 7 students. This activity encourages abstract thinking, which addresses a skill that is difficult for students, yet is valuable to have.

First, Participants chose short poems with figures of speech and symbolism in them. Then, they placed students in small groups and gave each group a copy of the poem. Students were given a short time to read and try to comprehend the poem. Then, they were asked to "get the poem on its feet" and use their bodies, and/or sound effects, but no words to physically show what the poem meant. All groups presented their work, so that even those groups who did not really understand the figurative meanings understood after watching the other groups.

This begs the question, however, how do the students who did not understand the poem feel when they realize they misinterpreted it, or interpreted it too literally? This could be a problem when using any Process Drama activity, but especially this, more difficult Process Drama method. It may be threatening for some students to share in this way and risk feeling foolish. Therefore, I always talk about drama presentations as belonging to the whole group once they are shared, so different groups may have different

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[6] This is the only method for which I did not know of an accepted and suitably interesting title. Thus, I coined my own catchy title.

ideas, but we all own the collective understanding. Also, I rarely mark this activity. By the time this technique is used, students should be used to the fact that the drama does not have to be worth marks to be useful, and be comfortable taking a few dramatic risks. I would caution teachers to take cues from your students, and do not try techniques for which your students are not ready.

If a group did feel badly about missing the point of the literature being studied, this could be discussed in the debriefing after the presentations. One can facilitate the debriefing in such a way as to point out effective aspects of each group's presentation. Debriefing after this technique especially is very important not only so that everyone emerges from the experience with a clear understanding of the poem, its use of metaphor, and its symbolism, but also so that students' feelings, particularly negative ones, about the activity are dealt with right away.

One important note that Participant B discovered with her poem was that she had to go over some of the vocabulary in the poem first, or the students would not have understood it at all (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 4).

In summary, Participant B said that if she had not used drama to present poetry the students would not have:

1. Enjoyed the poetry as much. (Wagner (1998) discusses McCaffrey's 1973 study which concluded that, " Oral dramatic techniques in the study of poetry resulted in a significant increase in student appreciation of poetry and involvement in its study. Dramatic techniques changed students' negative attitudes toward poetry" (p.184).)
2. Delved into the layered meanings of a poem. OR
3. Caught on to the symbolism within the poems. (Unpublished raw data 10, p. 3).

**4. Devil/ Angel or Conscience**

This technique is a live illustration of the decision - making process. One student plays the role of the Devil or Bad conscience, one plays the role of the Angel or Good Conscience, and a third student plays the role of the person or character making the decision. This is particularly useful to help students understand the motivation behind characters' decisions, and to understand the concept of dilemma. It can be used with any piece of literature that includes an important decision or a dilemma. We used the technique in several ways. One way is to break the class up into groups of three students each and have them simultaneously explore the question posed by the literature using the Devil/Angel method. Then, we would ask for two groups to volunteer to present to the class, which would then lead into a debriefing class discussion to deepen the learning. I always encourage the student playing the character to attempt to put themselves in that character's shoes and choose the most convincing conscience. Especially when students are just learning the technique, I usually have them do a Devil/ Angel chart individually before actually trying or presenting their live versions. Once the technique has been introduced and all students have had a chance to experience it, then I will use it whenever a decision comes up in what we are reading by taking three volunteers from the class to improvise it and then debriefing what happened.

**5. Hot Seats**

This activity requires an individual or group either in or out of role to answer spontaneous questions from the audience. We used this technique in its most basic form with those on the Hot Seat actually sitting and facing the audience. This technique is useful for a get -to- know- you and become comfortable doing oral presentations exercise with students being themselves on the Hot Seat and other classmates asking questions. It is also excellent to help students explore literary characters in a specific and meaningful way; it is an effective alternative to written character sketches. Additionally, it is an efficient pre-test character review. We used Hot Seats in several ways in our study. After

a Novel Study, Participant C used the technique with a quick individual preparation time. She asked students to brainstorm individually everything they could remember or find in the book about the two main characters in a short time limit. Then she asked for two volunteers and them play those main characters on the Hot Seats. Finally, the other students used their brainstorming to ask good questions of the characters. Participant C was "…amazed at the amount of information that the students remembered from the novel…" (Unpublished raw data 11, p. 3).

Another way we used Hot Seat, which I would recommend the first time the technique is used, is to break the class up into groups and give each group a character from the piece of literature. Then, those students must make a detailed chart for that character including the headings as follows: Physical Appearance, Speech and Actions, Narrator Comments, and Speech and Actions of Other Characters. Next the groups may choose one person to represent them or they may collectively play the character. (If the teacher wants to encourage participation from all, he/she can make the latter mandatory.) Each group then presents one character from the literature so that all major characters are included. As always after Process Drama work, the experience should be debriefed. Participant A summarized the technique as follows: "Aside from being very entertaining, the students learned a lot" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 3).

**6. Additional Techniques (Soundscapes, Predictions Scenes, Out-scenes)**

Soundscapes are sound tracks made with participants' bodies, voices, and/or instruments to create an environment or mood. They are beneficial when used as a preset for short stories that rely heavily on setting. First, the teacher would have students brainstorm all the sounds that could be heard in the setting of the piece of literature. If the students are new to Soundscape, the teacher might want to assign certain noises to certain children. Older students, or those who have used the technique several times, can choose any noise(s) they wish during the activity. The teacher may "conduct" the

Soundscape using hand motions to bring students in and out of the sound. How it is used is only limited by imagination. With a responsible group, it is quite interesting to have them do the Soundscape in the dark. This helps them really focus on the sounds they are hearing and the mood that those sounds together create. Even this technique, where there is no spotlighting and less chance for individuals to feel uncomfortable, should be debriefed to deepen the learning. The idea of mood and how it is created in a story tends to be clarified when considering the process of creating a Soundscape.

Prediction Scenes are improvised scenes that foretell what might happen next in a piece of literature. They are very useful for students to practice figuring out what will come next in a plot by using clues from the text. Out-scenes are improvised incidents that *could* have been part of a story, novel, or play but really are not. For instance, when studying Romeo and Juliet, students could prepare an out-scene where Juliet tells her nurse why she loves Romeo so much or where Capulet explains why he is so strict with his daughter. The out scenes, then, are used to explore character development and motivation, why certain plot points occurred, and so on. Students have to practice inferring from the literature to create them, as they should be plausible within the world of the literature being studied. The aforementioned two techniques should only be used with students who have had extensive experience with the first six methods as these scenes require students to improvise movement and dialogue simultaneously, which students of this age find difficult even with actual instruction in a Drama class. Otherwise, the scenes tend to be very superficial or off topic. Teachers who wish to use these techniques with less experienced students could have students do scored improvisations. This means that students can have a short amount of time to plan (write a "score") and try their ideas before presenting them to an audience. Due to the complexity of this technique, and the potential for spotlighting, debriefing is crucial.

**Progression of Techniques**

Of the basic techniques I chose to use in this study, there is a progression to

follow to ease students into the participation levels expected of them. This is important especially for shy students, but also for all students. I suggest beginning with a simple *Teacher-in-Role* activity first. This shows students that the teacher is willing to "do drama" in front of the class. This makes a difference to students because they think that if the teacher is willing to do it, they can at least try. For example, each member of the action research team used the Sentence Survivor Game show as her first technique. The teacher plays the host, and can exaggerate the character for fun. The students play the roles of contestants, and it feels familiar to all. This eases everyone into using drama in E.L.A. If the teacher is very confident about using drama, he/she can play the roles of the main characters in a story or novel and have his/her students pretend to be reporters and interview him/her. Basically all students have to do is ask the teacher questions, but they are able to experiment with role in the process.

After Teacher-in-Role, I would recommend using *Soundscape* next. Because the whole class can be involved and no one is spot lighted, it is a great early activity. After that, *Tableau or Figurative Physicals* are the logical next steps because they only require students to use their bodies in the presentation rather than also having to add dialogue or think on their feet. Once students are comfortable with tableau, inner and outer dialogue[7] can be added to it if the teacher wishes. Next, I would introduce the *Devil/Angel or Conscience* activity. This requires students to do some thinking on their feet while in front of the class. Having students try this technique in small groups first and selecting volunteers to show the whole class helps students become accustomed to the method. If desired, the teacher could watch the other groups privately during rehearsal. Once this technique has been experienced, then students should be ready for the more in-depth *Hot Seats*.

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[7] The teacher either taps a character on the shoulder or says, "Name, inner or outer dialogue." For inner dialogue, the student says out loud what he/she thinks the character would be thinking at that moment in the action of the story. For outer dialogue, the student would say aloud a line the character might or did say at that point in the story.

One way to introduce students to hot seating is to have each student be on the hot seat as himself or herself and the class may ask a set number of questions for each person. As an added bonus, this also helps build community in the class. Once students are comfortable with and proficient in these basic Process Drama techniques, more difficult activities that require both movement and vocals such as *Prediction Scenes* or *Out-scenes* may be used. If one were to begin with activities that spotlight individuals right away, the shyer students might be alienated. However, with this progression, those students were able to ease into it, and many of them were surprising us with their amazing presentations by the end of the study. Participant A noted that because the shy students were playing a role, playing somebody else, their comfort levels increased and they were able to deal with being up in front of the class. In fact, one of her very shy girls used her personality to strengthen her presentation by choosing to play Lady Diana Spencer, otherwise known as Shy Di. Participant A was impressed and surprised by her shy student's ability to "[get] up there and just [do] the part." We surmised that her shy student felt safe presenting because she was not playing herself, and that it was a role with which she identified. (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 8).

Finally, to ensure that Process Drama will work for all types of students, it is important that the teacher organize the groups. By spreading out the known "Drama kids", "challenging kids" and "shy" kids, especially for early activities, the teacher helps to promote success for each group. Classroom teachers, of course, know this from prior experience with any type of group work.

Below is a summary of the main techniques used in our study and Participants' reactions to them.

**Table 1: Reactions to Process Drama Techniques Used**

| Technique | E.L.A. Concepts Enhanced | Perceived Effect(s) on Students | Change? | Use Again? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Teacher-in-Role** | -Students did really well on exams that were | -Motivated students<br>-Challenged them and helped them | -Changed the original game to a version | -Consensus YES simpler version. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | reviewed using the Game Show format.<br>-Game Show can enhance the recall of any E.L.A. concepts. | reinforce and apply learning.<br>-"It [the activity] gave them an opportunity to apply it [the concepts] without having to do it on paper," said Participant B. (Unpublished raw data 3, p. 2) | with less preparation. | -Good introduction to playing roles in E.L.A. class. |
| **Tableau** | -Understanding plot, main plot points and their sequencing, visualizing what is read, skimming for information (to find main points). | "Students loved it and were eager to participate…It did help them to remember the important events in the correct order which was reflected in subsequent test and essay writing" enthused Participant A. – students were focussed when presenting and watching! (U.R.D. 3, p.3)<br>-Teachers felt students did better on plot questions on tests after using Tableaux (U.R.D. 4, p. 2). | -Would make sure to tell the students to hold the tableaux long enough for the teacher to mark them (about 20 seconds each) | -Consensus YES<br>-Very versatile technique. |
| **Figurative Physicals** | -Understanding of figurative language and symbolism in poetry.<br>-Participant C called it "…an excellent way to teach students how to analyze poetry without having to use words" | "The poem was a metaphor…and it (the drama) enhanced not only understanding of a metaphor, but the effectiveness of metaphor as a poetic device" (U.R.D. 3, p.7). | -Really make sure the poem chosen is not too difficult for the grade level. | -Consensus YES<br>-Would use as a preset activity with older students and a culminating activity with younger students. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (Unpublished raw data 11, p. 2). | | | |
| **Devil/ Angel or Conscience** | -Helps students understand dilemma, character motivation, and is a live example of the decision-making process.<br>-Enhances capabilities in the Speaking and Listening Language Arts. | -"[It] strengthened our understanding of [the character] and the decisions he had to make" stated one student (U.R.D.13, p. 1)<br>-Seemed to give students more empathy towards characters with difficult decisions.<br>-Prompted insightful class discussions on important issues. | -Would always have students do their own charts first, even if just having a couple sets of volunteers present. | -YES<br>Note: Not all participants tried this technique during the active research phase. |
| **Hot Seats** | -Skimming for information and recognizing pertinent information because "all their answers have to be referred from, rooted in the text" (U.R.D. 3, p. 14).<br>-Enhances capabilities in the Speaking and Listening Language Arts<br>-Hones interviewing and/ or questioning skills. | -Watching helps students who still have questions about the text understand it.<br>-Students were able to "totally ham it up,…[but] they were thoughtful as well" (U.R.D. 4, p. 8).<br>They stayed in character well and some were "really, really creative" (U.R.D. 4, p. 9).<br>-Made the characters in texts more alive to the students. | -No changes needed. | -Consensus YES<br>-Hot seats are "a good way to evaluate how much kids remember from the novel [ or other text ]" (U.R.D. 5, p. 1). |

***Key Points from the Action Research Spirals***

**Spiral One**

Validity of Process Drama in the E.L.A. classroom was the first main issue to

arise in our group meetings. Participants wanted to "legitimize" the use of drama in the classroom beyond the fact that it is now part of the sixth language art, Representing. As Participant A summarized, "So that's what I 'm looking for – legitimate ways that I can introduce drama and bring it in so the kids take it seriously and there's a real value to it." Participants wanted students to see drama as an academic pursuit -- as more than "just a fun activity" (Unpublished raw data 1, p. 3).

We began to explore Participant A's request. She was on target with her original statement in that how the students perceive the use of drama in the E.L.A. classroom depends on how the teacher introduces it or "brings it in" to the lesson. If a teacher perceives drama only as a way to bring fun into the lesson, students will sense that whether it was stated aloud or not, and will react accordingly. Therefore, teachers need to introduce Process Drama activities in the same way they would an essay assignment – in a serious, clear, concise manner. Many students will find the activities fun, but that will be more of an added bonus than an expectation set up by the teacher saying, "Today we are going to do something fun."

Unfortunately, because of the way our education system is set up, and the way we raise our children to value grades rather than the learning behind them, one way to ensure that students (and parents indirectly) take an activity seriously is to evaluate it summatively. How to evaluate Process Drama activities was the second issue that arose during the first spiral of our action research. Because the whole idea was new to the participants, they were concerned about how to evaluate it fairly. Therefore, we discussed it, and I provided sample rubrics that they could use (Appendix J). When evaluating any drama, my experience has taught me that to be fair, you must grade on predetermined criteria that have been shared with the students. That way, teachers can avoid being accused of favoritism or purely subjective marking. Thus, if teachers feel that they must have a summative evaluation for each drama activity to validate it, they may do so by using the appropriate rubric or marking scale.

However, certain techniques, such as the Devil/Angel technique, may not lend themselves as easily to summative evaluation. The first time the technique is used, it is beneficial to have all the students try it. Therefore, it could be graded if the teacher wanted to do so. Later, the Devil/Angel technique may be done with three student volunteers in front of the class to deepen understanding of a dilemma in a piece of literature without dividing the class into groups and having each group present just so you can mark it. Watching one, or two groups and then discussing what they saw is generally enough to help students understand a character's motivation(s) and choices more deeply. Having all the students present just so the teacher can grade it would likely not be the best possible use of class time.

Sometimes when Process Drama is used, the only type of evaluation needed is formative evaluation. For instance, if you use drama as a prewriting activity, and you plan to evaluate the writing activity, you do not need to evaluate the actual drama activity to know that learning has occurred. If the students have fewer problems with writer's block, and if the students write more and write more creatively than they did before participating in the Process Drama activity, then you can conclude that using the drama has helped students meet the planned learning outcomes.

**Spiral Two**

During this AR spiral, participants began to realize that process drama activities are adaptable and that a technique that works for one type of literature can also work for another. By listening to each other talk about how they used techniques, participants started to see how they could use the same method in a different way. This excited me as I had hoped that participants would begin to have their own ideas about how to incorporate process drama into their lessons, and seeing its versatility was a step closer to that goal.

For instance, Participant A was describing how she used tableau to help students identify and understand the main points of a novel, and then Participant B realized that

she could use it for Narrative poetry as well. Not only would it help students pick out the main points of a Narrative poem, but also it would clearly illustrate to students that Narrative poems are really just stories in a different form. Next the group began discussing using tableaux to help teach elements of plot in short stories. Instead of always having students write out answers to the dreaded plot questions such as: What is the initial incident of the story? What is the climax of the story? And so on, the students could create tableaux to answer each of the questions instead. These realizations may not have happened so quickly if all participants had been teaching the same type of literature at the same time.

Spiral Two revealed that participants had something in common – the lingering difficulty separating the concepts of Drama and Theatre. As we talked about Narrative Poetry, one participant suggested a great Reader's Theatre version of "The Highwayman" that the other teachers could use. Groff (1982) defines Readers Theatre as

> a dramatic procedure in which the roles in a play are read by individual performers with little of the staging that normally accompanies conventional theatre. Rather than memorizing dialogue, the performers in Readers Theatre read from hand-carried scripts. The readers sit or stand and use their voices, rather than action, to focus their attention (and that of any audience) on the ideas in the literature. (p. 105)

Then we discussed whether Reader's Theatre fits in with the kinds of activities we have been doing for the research. We concluded that Reader's Theatre is a wonderful Language Arts activity for Reading, but it is more Theatre than Drama because it is a type of reenactment of a story or poem that is meant to be delivered as per a script. It would count as using Representing in one's classroom, but a set script does not really allow participants to feel like they are in the 'here and now' of the story, living it. Thus, it does not apply to what we are examining in this study. I summed it up when I said, "We're talking about gaining deeper understanding or really living the text as opposed to just

performing it" (Unpublished raw data 3, p. 5).

**Spiral Three**

This phase of the AR study most clearly showed that Process Drama in the E.L.A. classroom seems to work for all types of students. It gives students who are less gifted in writing a way to clearly express themselves, it gives those "middle" students a chance to stand out and shine, and it challenges top academic students to stretch themselves in new directions. But what the study really made clear to us was that Process Drama activities even work well for those children laypeople would call "bad" and we teachers call "challenging", as long as appropriate management techniques are in place. Surprisingly, with the right progression of techniques and teacher attitude, Process Drama even works well for shyer students.

Academically, the ranges in our classrooms seem to become wider as the years pass. It is not uncommon in a Grade 6 – 9 classroom to have some students who read and write several grades below their current level, many who are right at grade level, some who are reading and writing at a high school level, and one or two who are beyond that!

Using Process Drama activities seemed to have an equalizing effect. Students who have struggled academically seem to welcome the chance to share their ideas in a way that does not automatically remind them of previous learning difficulties or low marks. When given the chance, many of these students are able to show deeper insight into a character or a story through Process Drama. For example, one of my students, who was diagnosed with several learning difficulties and had a terrible time expressing him/herself (referred to as either gender to ensure complete anonymity) in written form, amazed the class with his/her excellent Hot Seat performance. He/she continued to do well in all drama activities, and it helped the class change their opinion of this student as "the dumb one" to having new respect for him/her.

Anyone who has taught Grades 6-9 knows how classroom dynamics usually work. Everyone knows who is "the dumb one" and who are the "brains". Often, anyone who

falls in between is all but ignored. Some of these "average" students, who are not necessarily the best at any other Language Arts activities, suddenly find themselves being recognized for their contributions. I have seen several of those students come alive before my eyes whenever drama techniques were used. In one case in particular, a student who used to like fading into the background became the person people wanted in their groups when doing drama because that student was so good at it.

It was really interesting to see how students who are used to receiving top marks in all school activities, and who are quite comfortable with that status quo, react to exploring Language Arts through Process Drama. Participant A's academic challenge students, many of whom were "very, very, very science/math oriented…[and] more linear in their thinking," had never really enjoyed Language Arts in the past. She said, "I take it as a testament [to Process Drama] that these very science oriented individuals actually enjoy coming to my class now." Participant A explained why she thought this was true, "I think part of that is the fact that they are allowed to explore, and to do things differently, and to use those verbal skills, and those acting skills, and to interact, and to have more control of the learning environment" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 10). For these students, the discovery aspect of Process Drama was like doing a language arts experiment, which appealed to them.

Then there are those students whose academics are often the least of the teacher's worries – the "challenging" student. This type of student, often referred to as the class clown, is the one continually disrupting the learning for others. At the beginning of the study, Participant A had almost an entire class of such children. In fact, at first she decided not to use Process Drama with them because, as she put it, she had "…issues that need[ed] addressing first" (Unpublished raw data 1, p. 6). She was concerned that their poor behavior would be worse during drama activities.

As the study progressed, we discovered that with the right management techniques, challenging students were kept on task during drama activities. Teachers who

wish to use Process Drama in their classrooms may want to consider the following management techniques. As teachers who use cooperative learning methods know, when students are off rehearsing in groups, the noise level is usually a little higher than when students are given individual seatwork. Thus, it is useful to employ common control devices from the drama classroom. These must be established with the students before any drama work is attempted. To engage the students' attention while rehearsing, a number of methods are useful. Because I am a drama teacher with a loud voice, I call out, "Freeze!" Students must stop moving and talking mid-motion and mid-sentence and listen. I make it clear that they need not freeze in their exact position when I call freeze, but may move into a relaxed position first. When the noise level is only moderate, I will clap a rhythm to the students, they clap it back, and then are still and quiet. Other drama teachers use other methods for their quiet signals. Some teachers whistle or use an instrument like a drum, some flash the lights, and still others call out something and expect quiet after the response (i.e. call out "bread" and students say "butter" and then are quiet). I encourage teachers to choose something that is comfortable for them. It is also useful to have a signal for students to make an audience or put the classroom back to rights after a drama activity. I generally call out, "Seats!" or "Audience" and count down. You train the students to accomplish the task before you get down to zero. It may seem more like a method to be used with Elementary students, but middle school students accept it as part of doing drama. To ensure work is being done during rehearsal time, I generally have students evaluate group members on their group work and count that towards the final marks. I make it clear that only I will see the forms (Appendix K). Knowing that their peers are evaluating them and that it counts for marks generally ensures on task behavior. Finally, it is also useful to review audience etiquette for when students are presenting; this is likely done in E.L.A. classrooms in any case for assignments that fulfill the Speaking Language Art. By adding some simple control devices to the classroom routine, teachers can help students, even those considered

"challenging," stay on task during Drama activities.

Once Participant A established her drama routines with one class and saw how beneficial they were, she started to use Process Drama with her "challenging" class with great success. She said, "My boisterous students did the best of all. They love attention and this was very positive attention" (Unpublished raw data 10, p. 3). One specific example of how Process Drama worked well for a certain "challenging" student happened in one of my classes. This student never seemed to be interested in anything we did in class. He/she did not like to write, hated grammar and mechanics, and merely tolerated reading. He/she often acted out or made comments to elicit a response from the rest of the class. Sometimes he/she would purposefully attempt to nap in class! Yet, whenever we did Process Drama, he/she surprised me. When we did tableaux for our novel study, he/she came up with the idea of some students being the inanimate objects in the scene, which made their tableau unique and easy to understand. Moreover, on our Novel Unit test, he/she earned a high score on the sequencing question, which I speculated was due to the tableaux, because his/her scores on the rest of the test were significantly lower. However, the really amazing moment came when we were using the Devil/Angel technique to understand a key dilemma in the novel. The main character has to decide whether to save her father's killer, or leave the injured man to die alone. I had asked for volunteers, and, surprisingly, this student volunteered. I admit I was reluctant to choose that particular student, but knew I had to give everyone a chance. Thus, I assigned him/her the part of Angel (good conscience). This student advanced so many valid arguments based on the novel, that the student in the middle playing the book's main character was convinced to heed his/her arguments. A teacher aide who witnessed this was amazed at the depth of his thinking. It was interesting to see a student who usually liked to "play the devil" be so convincing as an angel (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 1). For that challenging student, those successes with Process Drama made a real difference. Without them, he would not have passed Grade 8 E.L.A. More importantly, he learned

how satisfying it could be to contribute positively to a class.

Some students rarely contribute to class, but not because they are too busy napping or making trouble, but because they are too shy. With the right presentation of Process Drama by the teacher, and a progression of techniques (see "Techniques Used" section) to help students become comfortable, even shyer students have success with Process Drama. In my experience, the key to working with shy students in drama is to ease them into it and build up their confidence. One should avoid spotlighting timid students too early. When Participant C was talking about how Process Drama can benefit students, she said it would help "shy students… to come out of their shells" (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 6). I have seen this happen many times in my career thus far.

One key to this is the teacher. He/ she needs to be comfortable with the techniques, be willing to participate him/herself, and display a positive attitude. Participant B thought that if the teacher first showed the students that he/she was not afraid to try role-playing him/herself, and "be vulnerable [him/herself] in front of [his/her] students then it [would] foster an environment of safety, and [would help] kids feel safe being able to perform" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 3). The teacher also needs to give the students the impression that he/she has full confidence in them and their abilities to complete Process Drama activities well. For example, one of Participant C's classes did not even like to read in front of each other at the start of the year. By the end of the year, the teacher's comfort and confidence with the techniques had increased and the students' were exploring Language Arts through Process Drama just as successfully as her "outgoing" class!

**Spiral Four**

The last spiral of the active research phase saw the participants' creativity in using drama in their classrooms blossoming. Participant B continued applying the techniques to different genres of literature than we used originally for those techniques. Participant

C came up with a novel study activity to help students understand how the main character felt when he went blind. She had students choose partners and took them all outside. One student was blindfolded and had to lead his/her partner around the schoolyard without injuring him/her. Then they switched roles. After the Blind Walk[8] activity, they debriefed the experience as a class and discussed the question: Would you rather be born blind or go blind later in life like this character? Participant C found that the students demonstrated a much deeper understanding of the main character after the activity.

Participant A created an excellent assignment that built on Hot Seats. She had students pick a biography or autobiography of a famous person who somehow made a difference to the world and read it. Then each student had to be that character on the Hot Seat. However, she extended the whole idea by having these famous people be guests on a talk show. Therefore, students also had opportunities to play the talk show hosts and ask questions. Then, she took her highlighter pen microphone out into the "audience" to give those students a chance to ask questions as well. By this point in the study, the students were so used to participating in Process Drama activities and were so immersed in their roles that "they wouldn't start without it [highlighter] in front of their mouths. Excuse me, Mrs. --, we don't have the microphone," and they would not ask their question until she ran over and held the highlighter to their mouths (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 9).

***The end of the active research phase: Participants' Personal Reactions***

While reflecting on the study, Participant A said, "That's [being dramatic] my natural bent anyway, …and so what getting involved in the study has done, [it] has given me some more direction, and more ideas of the kinds of things that I can do…." She went

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[8] An interesting aside: Blind Walks are actually used in many drama classrooms for trust and teambuilding. It is fascinating that the participant with the least drama experience thought of it without direction.

on to talk about how working with the AR team fit in with her personal philosophy of team teaching. She appreciated my expertise and having the whole group with whom to brainstorm and plan (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 11). At our last meeting of this phase, Participant A talked about her belief in multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 1993) and that everything she had learned in the study fit "...well with [her] education philosophy" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 3). Because she believed in the philosophy behind the study, she was "...really excited, [and] wasn't nervous" about using drama in her E.L.A. classroom. She explained that part of her confidence was because she had "...a good class to begin with because they're really open for that kind of thing in a lot of ways." Thus, her agreement with the basic philosophy of the study, combined with an open-minded class, "...was a good combination. Participant A concluded, "Everything seemed to work really well, and the kids seemed to learn more, better" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 3).

In the final interview of the active research phase, Participant B said that while she always felt confident about using drama in her classroom, she now felt "more competent." She went on to explain, "...it's easier to see where to link it [the drama] and stick it in [to lessons] now." She added, "I think we're [E.L.A. teachers] programmed to just do the writing and the reading." After participating in this study, she can see past the traditional reading and writing activities, and believes it will be more automatic to add "dramatic interpretation" of a piece of literature to her lessons (Unpublished raw data 64, p.1).

Participant C was not only the youngest and newest teacher involved, she also said the following about herself earlier in the study: "Well, teachers like me aren't that

creative to start with" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 4). Yet, she came up with the Blind Walk exercise for her students on her own during the active research phase. In other words, she was more creative than she thought; she merely needed the support and the tools to express it. At the beginning, Participant C felt "unsure about it [using drama]," and was not sure "just how [she] was going to use it." Yet, after using Process Drama for various types of literature, and seeing the positive responses of the students, she asserted, "I do feel confident with it, and I think it would be a great addition to just analyzing poetry and short stories with writing by doing it this way [with drama] (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 1).

***Time does tell: Participants' Thoughts After a Year***

Participants ended the active research phase feeling confident, but how did they feel after being "on their own" with it for a year? It is one thing to try new teaching techniques when you have promised to do so, and when you have the ongoing support of a group of people who are trying those same techniques. It is another thing to continue using them after your official obligation is over and the group meetings have stopped. I wanted to know if the participants were still using Process Drama; then I would truly know if their pedagogical practices had been informed in a lasting way by this study.

Because of her natural dramatic flair, Participant A began the study feeling "somewhat confident," but now she concluded, "I am much more comfortable now because the students love it. They really get into it. They participate well. They're excited…[The study was] such a positive experience that it's increased my confidence to use it [drama] in the classroom" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 1).

Participant B said, "I'm much more at ease, and I also see the spaces where I can

fit the drama process into my lesson much clearer and much easier than, let's say, before [the study]." She went on to say that she has gained confidence when integrating drama into her lessons from semester to semester and year to year. Participant B added that she also became more confident "introducing it as a performance [Teacher-in-Role]" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 1). In other words, Participant B became more comfortable being in role herself.

As she reflected on the study, Participant C said, "Well, I felt a lot more confident in the end than I did in the beginning, because I'm not a drama major…so I'd never used any of those techniques I don't even think in university." She went on to talk about when she began to feel comfortable using drama, she "really enjoyed it, and [she thought] the kids really enjoyed it" as well.

As the study progressed, their definitions of drama broadened considerably. At the end of the study, Participant A said "I can use it in a lot more ways that I thought I could" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 1). This made me wonder if people's preconceived notion of what drama is holds them back from finding out more about it and using it as a teaching tool. Participant C subscribed to this view initially. When she learned the Process Drama techniques, it changed her understanding of drama, and she realized that Hot Seats and role playing and all those methods were "drama as well even though [they have] nothing to do with acting out a play." She added, "even if it was two characters that we've made up right then and there; now I would consider that to be part of drama." She said that she would not have considered such things drama before, and she did not "think the kids would have thought that either" (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 2).

As a Visual Arts specialist from the school of thought that the Arts are generally

taught by specialists, it was a bit of a shock to Participant B to realize that non-drama specialists could do Process Drama in everyday classrooms. She was quick to point out, however, that she was "…not saying that you take away from the drama class, [or] the drama specialist teacher in any way" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 2). As a drama specialist, I appreciate that. Using drama as a teaching tool in Language Arts (or any other subject for that matter) simply broadens the definition and uses of drama. It is Drama-in-Education, not Theatre as was previously discussed.

The participants' definitions of drama were broadened by the end of the active research phase. For people who had used Reader's Theatre, but did not know what Process Drama was, I was curious as to how much they had used, what they learned in the action research study, and if they planned to keep using it. When I interviewed them after a year, I was pleased to learn that all participants had used Process Drama since the study, and all planned to continue using it in the future. The study really had informed and changed their pedagogical practices.

Of the techniques learned in the study, each participant had favourites. Participant A could not choose only one favourite. She said that she likely has used Hot Seats (and variations thereof) the most. Participants A and B both loved Tableaux. Participant A found tableaux very useful to review novels with students working in groups to represent every chapter in the book. She enthused, "[Tableaux] were a fabulous way of exploring what exactly the plot was, and what happened, and that would very quickly give the rest of the class a snapshot of the chapter" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 3). Participant B's love of Tableaux stems from her Visual Arts background. She loves the idea of "trying to interpret in a visual [way complete with] the structures, [and] the different levels."

Tableaux are used in Theatre classes to teach directors the art of composition, which is why it speaks to a Visual Artist. Participant B views tableaux "…as sculptural, or a photographic kind of thing…that really pushes the abstract understanding of the students" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 5).

Participant C liked the Devil/ Angel (Conscience) technique the best. She found it useful "…because if a character was going through it [decision making]" on the page, students understood it better when they saw a living version of the decision on the class "stage." She believed "the kids really liked it…because there was just lots happening all the time" and the whole class felt involved without having to be in the spotlight (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 4).

Participant A has really woven Process Drama into her Language Arts teaching. She said, "I would say that for almost every poem, short story, or novel that I do, I do at least one drama activity." When asked if she plans to use it in the future, she emphatically stated, "Absolutely" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 5). Participant C had a dramatic year, but not with Process Drama per se; she gave birth to her second baby. She uses role-playing with her daughter for deeper comprehension of stories. This use of drama is supported in Wagner (1998) who writes about Christie's 1987 research that "posits that repeated dramatic play is training for comprehension…. by encouraging predictions and focusing on the most important narrative events" (p. 179).

Participant C plans to continue using what she learned in the study at home with her own children, as well as when she goes back to teaching. When Participant B, who left partway through the study to have her first child, returned to teaching from her maternity leave, she continued to use Process Drama as much as she could. She also uses

it with her older child; she helps him gain more from his storybooks by using modified Process Drama. For instance, she has him predict what will happen next in his books using role-playing. As for using drama in the future, she said, "It's so beneficial and natural that I just can't imagine not using it" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 8).

Not only are they using it, but the participants also have been expanding on their uses of Process Drama. As previously mentioned, both Participants B and C have modified techniques to use with their own children at home. Participant B has expanded her use of Process Drama. Rather than "reinventing the wheel," she uses the techniques she learned in the study for other lessons or literature than we used in the study. She added, "So now when I look at something [a lesson], I just don't think of seat work, I think of drama work as well" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 8). Participant A has become very adept at thinking of drama work. Not only has she used and adapted the methods she learned in the active research phase, she has now built assignments around more advanced techniques such as Prediction Scenes.

With everything the participants learned, and continued to learn on their own after the study, their advice to other teachers who may want to try using process drama in their classrooms, or replicate this study would be valuable. Participant C thought people with no prior drama experience should not be afraid to try implementing Process Drama techniques. Her advice to them is, "you don't have to be a drama major, or have any background in drama to be able to do this, because I didn't, and it was successful for me." She went on to say that it would be hard for people like her, with no previous drama experience, to create their own lessons right away. She continued, "I think you have to talk about it, or there should be some sort of curriculum guide, or there should be

something that gives you ideas on it." She then suggested that I "should write a book or curriculum guide…with lesson plans" (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 4).

While I am writing that next book, Participant A's advice to teachers is, "Go for it!" She also said that when she meets teachers who want to try using Process Drama in their E.L.A. classrooms that she would be willing to "mentor a little bit, [and]…share her experiences." She would even offer them a chance to "come in and watch a class as it takes place, [so] they [could] see the seriousness…they [could] see the end results and…how enriching it is for the students" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 5).

Participant B's advice for those teachers who do not think they have the personality to use Process Drama, particularly Teacher-in-Role, is "…to understand that you are a performer on a daily basis, and that's what you do for a living, and to embrace that notion." How many other careers require that you are an effective public speaker every day? This advice stems from the participants' initial misconception that the kind of drama used in E.L.A. is the same as Theatre. Earlier, I suggest that teachers begin with Teacher-in-Role. That is because that way is easier for the *students*. When the "spotlight" is on the teacher, it is easier for students to relax and participate. As previously discussed, when students see a teacher doing drama, they tend to be more apt to try it themselves. However, if a teacher is really not comfortable with playing a role him/herself, he/she can use the other techniques very successfully without ever having to try Teacher-in-Role. It may be helpful for these more inhibited teachers to realize that the level of characterization required to role-play, to bring a character to life for a group of Grade 6 to 9 students, is nowhere near the skill level required to become a character for a professional stage or screenplay. Teachers are role-playing to represent a character in a

plausible way, whereas, in general, actors attempt to become a character in a more realistic way (this statement is not intended to reflect all the schools of thought on acting). Therein lies a huge difference (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 6).

Participant B also suggests that teachers who are new to using drama in E.L.A. start slowly. Without prompting from me, she came up with the same guidelines that I would give new users of Process Drama in E.L.A. She warns, "If you're intimidated by doing it, your students most definitely will be." She advises teachers to be "really positive, and try to create a really good environment." She also concurs with my suggestion to start with more low key, non spot-lighting activities such as Soundscape "…where everyone collaborates." She thinks it is a good idea to try the techniques with a smaller class, or even small groups at first. She believes it is important for teachers to try it, even if they begin with only one or two techniques a semester, or even a year until their comfort level increases. She concluded her advice with this encouragement, "I think your students will respond, and give you the cues that you will need to…either keep going or switch gears into something else" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 6). Once teachers understand the uniqueness of Process Drama and how to use it, their natural teacher instincts begin taking over, and they find ways to manage it, diagnose its effectiveness while it's happening, and, like any other lesson, adjust it spontaneously so that students will learn effectively.

Participants joined the study so as to augment their teaching methods to include the drama component of representing. As the study progressed, the teachers not only enjoyed using drama in their classrooms, but they found being part of our Action Research study beneficial in several ways. Participant A said, "The meetings were fun,

informative, interesting [and] helped me develop more as a professional, [as well as] explore another aspect of myself, my teaching, and so on" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 8). Participant B said it benefited her and her students to "…[get] ideas and lessons from someone who is a specialist." The biggest benefit for her was that now she has an "…arsenal of process drama knowledge…" that she can use for years to come (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 7). Participant C said, "I got ideas from the other girls about lessons that I could do…which I never would have thought of myself" (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 6). For her, being involved in the study was like having three mentors in her first year of teaching. All participants agreed that the biggest benefits were to their students.

***Benefits to the Students***

Implementing Process drama benefited teacher participants and helped them improve their teaching practices, but they perceived that it also brought many advantages to their students as an added advantage. Through teacher participants' observations and reflections, it seemed that drama in E.L.A. was beneficial to students for three main reasons:

1. It is an alternate method for students to express themselves in E.L.A. class.
2. Process Drama is one way of helping more students experience success in E.L.A. because it was perceived by my participants to be a motivating factor for students with different personalities.
3. Process Drama appears to enhance students' understanding of literature.

In Grades 6 through 9, students often feel pressured by peers to look and act in ways that are sanctioned by the group. Some students feel like they are in a pressure

cooker, and never feel like they can "let off steam" by freely expressing themselves, even in class. If they do express a true opinion, they fear censure, or worse, ridicule from their peers. Participant C noticed that for her students the Devil/Angel (Conscience) was, "...also a way for the students to be able to express their thoughts on the character or the plot of the novel, without having to justify their personal feelings because they were able to say that is how the character would feel" (Unpublished raw data 12, p. 4). In other words, they could express their honest feelings on an issue, through the character or the good or bad conscience, with an "out" if any of their peers questioned what they said. This would also apply to other Process Drama techniques as well. Participant A summed it up as follows: "Perhaps because it was role playing, the students didn't feel like they were putting themselves out there on display" (Unpublished raw data 10, p. 3). In Process Drama, and in the aforementioned case, Role-playing is a safety valve in the classroom. It acts like a safety valve on a pressure cooker – it lets off some steam in a safe manner so that the contents do not explode.

The other way of interpreting reason one is the more obvious way; students who have trouble expressing themselves through writing finally have a way to have their ideas heard. A student whose writing receives little positive attention, and/or who finds it difficult to say what he/ she really wants to say in written form, can suddenly earn respect for his/her ideas by presenting those ideas in the form of some type of drama. Participant A said it well as follows: "The dramatic method of representing ideas offers students with stronger verbal skills a different means of conveying their ideas. More students, therefore, will experience success in Language Arts" (Unpublished raw data 13, p. 1).

Giving verbal students a way to contribute to class and have their ideas heard

provides those students with an avenue for success, but it also helps aid the success of others. Students, who feel unsuccessful in a class or dislike an activity such as writing, are often loud or disruptive. The drama activities give those students a more positive way to use their verbal skills, thereby making the classroom a better learning environment for all. When students feel like they are being heard, and that their ideas are valued, they feel more inspired to learn and achieve.

When Participant A's students did their Hot Seats, most of them "didn't even use their notes; …they learned things from memory without realizing" (Unpublished raw data 5 p. 2). Practicing in role, and knowing they would be in front of their peers, helped students learn and remember important information, almost in spite of themselves. When a teacher tells students that they are going to be doing a drama activity "…where they're going to really have to know the character, and get into the character, …they're much more motivated to just go back to the book, go back to the play, or whatever it is that [they're] doing and really search out those bits of characters so that they can sort of incorporate that into their questioning, or to their role playing as the character." The depth and breadth of information that the students find for these types of character activities has been excellent in my experience. Although many students will do well no matter what type of assignment they are given, we often saw students putting forth a much greater effort to role-play a character than the effort a character chart or character essay might have received. Participant A added, "They get much more excited by it [the drama], and so I still get them to do some writing, obviously, …but I think I get them hooked by starting with the drama"(Unpublished raw data 7, p. 1). Of course, students still need to write in an E.L.A. class, but the drama activities give them more about which

to write. On the other hand, if students are learning just as much about character by doing Hot Seats, why do they have to write anything at all? Sometimes, I believe the Drama is enough. Teachers can use these techniques as a way into writing, but these activities can stand alone as well. For example, with one piece of literature, I will have students do a chart and Hot Seats, for another I will just have students do Devil/ Angel, and for the third I may have students start with Hot Seats and write individual character sketches after viewing them. The variety keeps the students interested, which also increases their motivation and thereby results in greater success for more students.

When Participant A attempted to make sense of what she observed, she said, "I don't know, it was just;…it's just more fun" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 2). Participant B's words clarified the point, "I'm a firm believer in working hard, but having a good time at doing that because otherwise it's just, it's not serving the same kind of purpose. I really truly feel that children are nourished through activities, and they absorb through activities that they can relate to and enjoy. If you don't enjoy it, it's not going to stick with you" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 4). Thus, because students can relate to and enjoy Process Drama activities, they are motivated to learn, and that learning tends to be retained. In the words of Participant B: "But for the most part, I think you're doing a class a disservice if you're not allowing different ways of learning and understanding into your room" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 2).

Using group work, particularly drama activities is about "getting students engaged, and also communicating with each other, and interacting with each other, not being so teacher centered" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 3). When students know that their learning and that of others depends on what they do, they tend to be more motivated.

Moreover, "...students are always much more interested when they're the center, when they're the ones that are facilitating the learning, when they're the ones that are leading the class and taking the initiative, and all of that, drama allows all of that to happen" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 3). Perhaps it is this feeling of really contributing to the learning of others, and working as a team to do so, that makes drama such a motivating and effective force in E.L.A. classrooms.

Drama may motivate students to learn in general, but how does it enhance students' understanding of literature? This point is closely related to the previous one. "Whenever Drama was involved in my lesson," said Participant A, "students just had more fun and were more motivated to delve deeper into a story or poem or novel than they might have been originally" (Unpublished raw data 13, p. 1). In my experience with Junior High students, when asked to answer chapter questions, or write a response to a piece of literature, many students attempt to do so from memory. They try to avoid the extra effort of going back to the text to find specific quotations to support their answers/ writing. As previously mentioned, students skimmed literature and looked for specific character information in order to avoid looking foolish on the Hot Seat. In order to create Tableaux, students have to skim/reread chapters to pick out main points. By simply rereading the text, they may grasp nuances previously missed, notice a key word or sentence, or make new connections to the text.

Preparing for the drama certainly enhances students' comprehension of the literature, but doing the drama is like living the literature, which takes that understanding to a new level. Drama is "an essential part of understanding literature in the sense that even when you read something in your own head, it's like there's a theatre going on. For

most people, when they interpret [literature], they visualize [and] they see the characters." An inability to visualize what they read is why some students have trouble with reading comprehension. Thus, "…embodying it [literature] in a drama process gives you that sort of external experience of that understanding and that, that connection with a piece of material" (Participant B, Unpublished raw data 9, p. 3). Therefore, using drama to understand literature is an extension of a very natural process. The drama may facilitate visualization when they read in the future. In any case, it brings the literature to life for all students, which then gives students a deeper understanding of that literature.

After the drama, the process of debriefing the activity ensures that even those who did not fully understand by doing or viewing the drama will understand in the end. Moreover, debriefing the activities deepens the understanding for many students who learned from preparing for and doing the drama. One participant was talking about how important debriefing is after drama activities. She said you cannot "…just leave it at that and say, oh that was really interesting, hey?" and expect all the students to gain the full benefit from the activity. She feels "you need to point out the reasons why it was effective, how it worked, [and]] how they gain[ed] that understanding" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 4). I agree, but feel that it must be done with some subtlety. Through effective questioning, you help the students come to an understanding rather that telling them outright. Asking the right debriefing questions is very important. After we finished using a drama technique and debriefed it, one of my students commented, "It made us think more, and harder" (Unpublished raw data 14, p. 3). I believe that any activity that can do that for Grades 6-9 is definitely worthwhile, but the next section will outline what our research showed in that regard.

***Drama: A Legitimate Form of Learning in E.L.A.?***

If a place in the curriculum and the previous benefits to students are not enough to convince educational stakeholders that drama is an academic and legitimate way to learn in E.L.A. class, the Participants' experiences should be. Even though this study focused on the experiences of the teachers, teachers tend to view things they do as successful or not based on their students' reactions. Thus, when we reflected as a group, the conversation invariably turned to effects of the Process Drama methods on the students. While I believe there were some reservations at first, all participants came to view Process Drama activities in E.L.A. as academic pursuits.

Participant C explained her view of drama as scholarship thus: "I think they [students] learn just as much from doing these activities than they would if I was to write it on the board, or give them a handout, or you know; they still learn the same thing in the end as they would have if I would have done all that" (Unpublished raw data 8, p. 2). She began to see the drama activities as something that can replace more traditional tasks, yet remain academic. This reminds me of an old Chinese Proverb that my first advisor, Dr. Joe Norris, often quoted when speaking about drama. It is as follows:

> I hear and I forget.
> I see and I remember.
> I do and I understand.
> (www.quotationspage.com)

Because drama requires students to physically "do Language Arts," and then watch each other, students remember and understand the concepts or literature discovered or presented through drama.

Participant B said, "If you were to ask them [students], is drama fun in the classroom, they would say yes…If you asked them, is it sometimes difficult to interpret?

I think they would say yes as well…it also challenges them" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 4). Participant A was amazed by "the nuances and subtleties that the students were able to pick up on as they experienced the drama and actually had to role play a certain character." When she realized the depths of understanding her students were achieving from experiencing the literature through drama, "It totally legitimized the whole exercise" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 3).

Additionally, Participant A also thought drama "…acts as a catalyst…" for writing. She found "…the quality of writing and the depth of the analysis and … the end product tend[ed] to be better as well if the students [had], you know, played around with it first." Because ideas to write often come from life experience, many students in Grades 6-9 have trouble finding their own ideas due to their young ages and relatively sheltered lives. Yet, if you give students some imagined experience through drama, "when they go to write it's not this like big blank piece of paper sitting in front of them; they've got ideas already, and they can translate that into the writing" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 3). From her observations, Participant A felt that, for the most part, the quality of student writing was much better after drama activities. A study, as described in the Youth Theatre Journal article by Barbara McKean and Peg Sudol (2002), showed similarly positive results with elementary school children. They conclude, "Drama as a strategy of instruction embedded within a writing/language arts unit helps students improve their writing" (34)

Participant B said, "I think that for sure it's academic; it [drama] pushes you into the abstract, which to me is far more challenging than anything concrete" (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 3). Educators are always wondering how to encourage critical thinking and

lateral thinking, but many are missing the fact that drama promotes both. In order for students to physically represent a poem (Figurative Physicals), they have to understand what the poem means and be able to show the meanings of abstract concepts and figurative language through their bodies and sound effects. They have to "think outside the box" to do this, as it is not something to which they could have memorized an answer. Furthermore, they cannot come to a reasonable interpretation without asking themselves and each other appropriate questions, gathering all the relevant information from the text, efficiently and creatively sorting through the information they gather, and then using logic to come to conclusions that represent the full meaning of the poem. In other words, the Figurative Physicals Process Drama method forces students to think critically to complete the activity.

Participant B went on to say drama allows each student to "…become a holistic learner, and…there's nothing more academic" than that (Unpublished raw data 9, p. 3). Patel (2003) defines this approach as: "The holistic approach is based on the view that teaching is a social activity" (p.3). Patel further describes the holistic approach as one that "develop[s] the learner as a critical, confident, independent learner and provide[s]… critical faculties that enable action in real situations." Patel further clarifies, "The interaction between the teacher and the student is a social act that needs to encompass the personal, professional, social, and human needs of the learner" (p. 3). She then describes these needs as "not merely the need to learn knowledge, but also the need to be heard, the need to be praised, the need to be accepted into the community of learners, as well as other human needs" (p. 3).

In light of Patel's explanation, I hope to expand upon Participant B's point. The

use of Process Drama in the E.L.A. classroom seems to fit the criteria to help develop holistic learners. Using Process Drama does make teaching more of a social activity than does direct instruction, for example. When drama is used, students and teachers interact with each other in new ways, and students' own work (i.e. Devil/ Angel technique) is used to clarify the learning rather than the teacher's lecture. As previously mentioned, drama is an excellent tool to produce "critical, confident, [and] independent learner[s]" (Patel, 2003, p. 3). Participants found that drama does promote critical thinking, helps students (particularly shyer ones) become more confident, and enables them to have some real input and control over their own learning. Moreover, this thesis cites examples of how drama allows even struggling or challenging students to be heard, praised, and accepted into a community of learners.

Patel also includes "other human needs" as needs of the holistic learner. Participant A described one such need when she talked about the "bigger picture" of teaching Language Arts. She knows that we have to teach basic Language concepts, but she also thinks "…its our job to teach empathy and understanding of people, of life." She says it is like the old saying about walking a mile in someone else's shoes to really understand them. Drama allows you to do just that. Through imagined experience and role-play, a student can become a character and, through Devil/Angel feel firsthand what it would be like to make the choices that character had to make. When Participant A's students were doing the Hot Seat technique, one student was very convincing as a grief stricken fiancée after her boyfriend died. "The whole class just calmed right down, and then they took it very seriously, [as] they asked this person the questions." Why did they suddenly take it more seriously? They could see and feel the character's grief embodied

in the slumped position and despairing tone of voice of their classmate. "She was so into the role, and the students began to sympathize, and where they had been a little bit harsh and judgmental before, they began to understand the dead boy and his character, and that he just wasn't a gang member, and so on."

Similarly, Participant C's Blind Walk activity also gave students a chance to have some valuable imagined experience. Being blindfolded and having to walk out of the school and around the playground with only a friend's voice as a guide gave students a small taste of the powerlessness one may feel when first becoming blind. Participant A summed it up well when she concluded, "I think it [drama] just really helps the students become more…understanding of human beings" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 4). Process drama, then, can help students develop the important human needs or empathy and understanding.

Therefore, both human and academic needs can be met using Process Drama in the E.L.A. classroom. To summarize, Participants discovered that students are able to learn as much from dramatic methods as traditional ones, achieve greater depths of understanding about literature, develop abstract thinking skills, and become more holistic learners.

***Definitions of Literacy***

As described above, the members of the action research team have accepted Process Drama as an academic and legitimate way to learn in E.L.A. classrooms. By extension, because Process Drama aids in the teaching of E.L.A., and because the purpose of E.L.A. education is to "prepare students for present and future language requirements" (Alberta Education, 2000, p. 1) and become literate people, it can be said that Process

Drama is a useful tool to prepare students to "meet new literacy demands in Canada and the international community" (Alberta Education, 2000, p. 1). Yet, I wondered: Does Process Drama play a significant role in literacy?

To answer my question, I collated all the participants' definitions of literacy, carefully reconsidered all the data from the study, and found a definition of literacy from which to begin. In the search for this definition of literacy, I found that one could write an entire thesis on the concept of literacy.

For the purpose of this paper, I found Street (2001) and Harste's (2003) ideas applicable. Street (2001) discusses the ideological model of literacy, which posits, "literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles." Street continues, "It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being" (p. 7). Literacy, then, is not simply a set of skills, but a socially constructed way of knowing. Depending on the group, then, the ways of knowing may be different.

Harste applies Street's concept of multiple literacies (which was developed through Ethnographic studies of literacy) to education. Harste suggests that, "In addition to language, humans have developed a variety of different ways to mean" (Harste, 2003, p. 8). Harste mentions the arts as some of those ways to mean. (he mentions art, music and movement on page 8 and includes drama on page 11). These ways to mean, then, can be considered part of literacy along with language skills.

Perhaps not all groups would consider drama (and the other arts) part of literacy. Harste claims, "Literacy means different things to different groups" (p.). Through our

study, our action research group has come to see Process Drama as an important part of teaching E.L.A., and by extension as a part of literacy. Harste's ideas support my point, "When coupled with the notion of multiple literacies, literacy can be thought of as a particular set of social practices that a particular set of people value" (Harste, 2003, p. 8). In the following text, I assume the existence of multiple literacies and explore the definitions of literacy that arose from a particular set of social practices (teaching, learning, and collaborative action research) that my particular set of research participants' value.

After each action research spiral, I asked the participants to tell me their definitions of literacy. I also asked them to think about the role, if any, that drama plays in literacy, but that I would not ask them to talk about it until after the final action research spiral. All three participants started to include drama in their definitions of literacy well before that final meeting. Other than the fifth definitions that came from the final, individual interviews, we discussed our definitions in group meetings. As an example, I have chosen Participant A's personal exploration with the term literacy to investigate in more depth below.

Participant A's first definition was:

> I would have to say literacy is not just the ability to actually read the words, but to read and to…make it part of you, to interact with, to assimilate, to make to understand more thoroughly, and to make it plug into something into your previous knowledge….It's hard to say in words. (Unpublished raw data 1, p. 5)

Even before she had very much experience with process drama, her definition of literacy left itself open for the inclusion of Drama. When she had to give her second definition, Participant A had decided that literacy was more than "being able to read, and write and

understand" (Unpublished raw data 3, p. 10). She added that literacy is also being able to apply what has been understood in some way. She said, "What I'm finding with the drama, it is a way for the kids to take meaning and then apply it, and so I think it enriches their understanding" (Unpublished raw data 3, p. 10). For example, when students are asked to pick out the main plot points in a story or chapter of a novel and write a chapter summary, many students that I have taught find this very difficult. The high achieving students often go too far and practically rewrite the entire chapter in their own words, many students do not even know how to start, and the students who struggle academically pick out a few plot points they remember that may or may not be the main ones. Yet, when I use Tableaux to teach students about main plot points, they have to apply their understanding of plot to make still pictures of that plot.

First, working as a group allows students to discuss which plot points are most important and why. If group members are confused about the concept of main plot points, others in the group are able to explain. Thus, they are more apt to find the appropriate plot points and understand them than they would if they worked alone. Second, once they have a group understanding, they then have to apply it to their Tableaux. Each frozen picture must make sense by itself, but also tell the whole story or chapter when seen in succession. If the class cannot understand the whole story/chapter from their set of Tableaux, they have not done their jobs. This idea that the whole story/chapter comes down to these main plot points is not always shown by children's written chapter summaries. However, a light seems to come on for students when they realize that the whole story/chapter is right there in their Tableaux. By applying the knowledge of plot in a physical way and making them condense it into three or four

frozen pictures, they see plot – literally and figuratively.

When it was time to share her third definition of Literacy, Participant A was teaching poetry at the time, and it struck her how poetry sometimes throws away the regular rules of English and just expresses emotion. This led her to expand her definition yet again: "Now I would add that, to take words, to make up your own words, to put them in your own order, to create your own meaning, to convey efficiently and effectively to your audience what you're feeling." To further clarify her thoughts, she added, "So it's not just you see what everybody else [read] and you understand what everybody has read, but rather you yourself can read what's inside, put it into thoughts, take those thoughts, [and] put them into words" (Unpublished raw data 4, p. 12). Drama, like poetry, is not bound by the regular rules of English. Sometimes, it just expresses emotion, too, and many students find drama easier to do than writing poetry. As for the essence of her last statement, I believe she was trying to say that each person who reads something would take something new from the text because of his/ her personal history, and then translate that to thoughts and finally words. Explaining in words why a piece of literature touched you in a certain way is not always easy, but reacting dramatically to literature helps students clarify, physicalize, and visualize their emotions. After that, it is often easier to put those thoughts and emotions into written form.

In her fourth and last definition of the active research phase, Participant A combined all her previous definitions maintaining that reading, writing, understanding, feeling and expressing those feelings were all part of literacy. This time, however, she wondered about the role of writing in literacy. She said, "You could almost skip the writing process in some ways" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 16). Traditionally in E.L.A.

classrooms, students have been asked to respond to what they have read in writing. Drama is another way of sharing those thoughts. From what we discovered in this study, therefore, every piece of literature read need not be responded to in writing. This allows reluctant writers to share their views and experience success.

Because Process Drama allows students a new way to respond to literature, it is also a good motivator for reluctant readers. This point was touched on earlier, but it is an important one. Anything that helps reluctant readers enjoy literature and think about it after forcing themselves through it is a good idea. As Participant A said, "It's fine to be able to read and write, but the kids actually have to want to, and they have to actually do it in order to enrich their lives....And so I think with the drama you get the kids excited about books" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 16). As discussed throughout this paper, using drama in this way does help children become more excited about literature. Whether it helps them visualize what they read or helps their minds work in such a way so as to connect with characters better, we have seen it work with students. Participant A continued, "My thing is literacy is about wanting to give the kids the desire to continue to read, and to continue to explore, and think at new levels"(Unpublished raw data 5, p. 16). She hopes that when our students read, they will recall some of the Process Drama activities, and "as they're reading their novel, even if it's a subconscious thing, they'll...read with a little bit more excitement and perhaps they'll think a little bit deeper" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 16). So, her definition of literacy now includes wanting to read, explore literature, and think deeply about that literature. She summed up her point thusly: "So I think we give them the tools and the skills to approach reading...[and] drama plays a really huge role in that" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 16). I agree. Drama

could play a "really huge role" in literacy, if more people knew how to use it.

After a year to continue to think about literacy, Participant A spoke about how most people start out thinking that the essence of literacy is simply being able to read, and, like her before the study, do not spend much time thinking about it. She now amalgamates all her previous definitions to come closer to a definition of literacy that works for her. She concluded, "It's a much, much broader definition. It's more about acting on the words, and playing with them, and rolling them around in their mind, and really understanding in a personal way the meaning of what it is that they're reading and experiencing [or] trying to comprehend"(Unpublished raw data 7, p. 11).

From Participant A's journey of discovery through the meanings of literacy, and what I have learned on my journey conducting this study, analyzing the data, reading Street and Harste's ideas about literacy, and writing this thesis, I have now developed a definition of literacy that makes sense to me in light of it all. My new definition is that, Literacy is a socially constructed way of knowing, valued by E.L.A. teachers, that links the six Language Arts and produces educated citizens who are not only able to read and write, connect what they read to previous and/or personal knowledge, understand literature beyond superficial levels, apply what has been understood, and be desirous to study and comprehend literature, but are also able to explore and express their thoughts and feelings through representation, using dramatic or other visual forms. Drama has a place in the participant's definitions of literacy, and it has a place in my new definition of literacy, but in the next section, we finally discover if that is enough to consider Process Drama literacy's new best friend.

***Is Process Drama Literacy's new best friend?***

I felt that my own experience supported the idea of a strong relationship between drama and literacy. During the last interview, I told participants the working title of the study that they had been part of for so long. Upon hearing, "*The New Language Art, Representing: Process Drama as Literacy's New Best Friend?*" one participant responded that she understood why I could not reveal the title sooner and added, "Isn't that interesting that that's exactly where we've ended up." When I said that I was initially a little worried that such a grand pronouncement was risky, she replied, "No, I think that everything that I've done [in the study] absolutely legitimizes that [title]…it makes sense, I like that it's catchy, and I think that's brilliant" (Unpublished raw data 7, p. 11).

Linking Drama with Literacy is in keeping with the New Literacy Studies movement, which is "one movement among many that took part in a larger "social turn" away from a focus on individuals and their "private" minds and towards interaction and social practice" (Gee, 1999, p.180). Developing literacy skills through drama is both interactive and social. Gee explains that the New Literacy Studies "are based on the view that reading and writing only make sense when studied in the context of social and cultural (and we can add historical, political, and economic) practices of which they are but a part" (Gee, 1999, p.180). . Brian V. Street (2003) attempts to make it easier for educators and others to work within this new view of literacy by differentiating between "literacy events" and "literacy practices." My understanding of "Literacy events" is that they are instances where a person endeavors to understand language symbols or any time a text is at the center of participant's activities and processes of meaning making (p. 2). Street (2003) quotes his earlier 1984 work to define "literacy practices" "as a means of

focusing upon 'social practices and conceptions of reading and writing'" (p.2) Later, Street states: "Literacy practices, then, refer to the broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts" (2003, p. 2).

In this study, teachers and their students participated in Process Drama as literacy events, and then the research team considered how the success of these literacy events could impact the literacy practices of our educational community.

This new way of viewing literacy espouses literacy as much more than mere acquisition of reading and writing skills, an idea with which I am in agreement. Yet, because of the research showing that literacy is different in varied social and cultural contexts, there seems to be reluctance in the field to be specific about what literacy development includes. Luke and Freebody (1999) seem to support the tenets of the New Literacy Studies, and therefore feel they need to "recontextualize" their original work on the four resources model of reading in light of new research in the field (p. 1). However, their original work gives teachers a much needed starting place in understanding literacy so as to nurture it in their students.

Luke and Freebody (1999) state "teaching and learning literacy, then, involves shaping and mastering the repertoire of capabilities called into play when managing texts in ways appropriate to various contexts" (p. 2). The capabilities (which in earlier writings they called roles) are:

- Code breaker (coding competence)
- Meaning maker (semantic competence)
- Text user (pragmatic competence)
- Text critic (critical competence)

(Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 1)

Luke and Freebody's ideas are widely used by educators in Australia, and their

ideas seem useful to me as a teacher here in Canada. From a practical standpoint as a classroom teacher, whether they call them roles or capabilities, the previous four points are a working model of what promotes literacy in societies and cultures similar to ours.

In light of this model, Process Drama can contribute to developing these capabilities, and thereby literacy. The action research team witnessed Process drama enabling students to become more effective code breakers, meaning makers, text users, and even text critics through their drama work. In other words, Process Drama helped students grow in the components of literacy (as described by Luke and Freebody). One anecdotal example of this came to light in a conversation with Participant B, as she praised the Figurative Physicals activity "because it forced them [students] to physically become the words" which helped them decode those words and find the metaphorical meaning that eluded all of them when they simply read the poem on the page. Students, who began the activity complaining that the poem was stupid and too hard, ended the activity with expressions such as, "Now, I get it!" That Process Drama method allowed students to compose and understand a visual text in order to understand the written text's "interior meaning systems" more clearly (Luke and Freebody, 1999, p. 5). Thus students were code breakers, meaning makers, and text users during the activity. During the debriefing of the activity, students discussed the effectiveness of the poem, exploring their capabilities as text critics.

Luke and Freebody's (1999) final position in the article is "that it is not that some literacy teaching methods work and others do not. They all work to shape and construct different literate repertoires in classrooms. They all have outcomes visible in practices and motivation" (p. 6) Consequently, while the use of process drama may not be standard

practice, it can certainly be an effective part of "literate repertoires in classrooms."

The efficacy of drama in promoting literacy stems from its ability to link the rest of the Language Arts. Over the years I taught Language Arts, I began to notice that many students view the Language Arts as separate entities rather than parts of a whole. Yet, in the 2000 English Language Arts Alberta learning document it states: "All the language arts are interrelated and interdependent; facility in one strengthens and supports the others" (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 2). This gap between students' views and the curriculum may be due to the way the Language Arts have been presented in the past in such a way that makes them seem separate. When students hear, "Today we are doing reading, tomorrow we are writing, and the next day we will be doing oral presentations," each part seems separate from the others. Yet when drama is used, it links all the language arts in a very natural and tangible way. When the language arts work together, literacy is being served.

To elaborate this point, consider the Devil/ Angel technique we used for this study. Students began by *reading* a text that included some sort of dilemma or decision. Next, they had to *write* arguments for and against whatever decision a character faced. Assuming the teacher divided the class into groups of three to explore the decision using the Devil/ Angel method, students would then have to *read* each other's writing, *speak* and *listen* to each other to decide which arguments were best and/or to find more. They may even need to return to the text to *read* key passages again or to find quotations or specific points from the literature to strengthen their arguments. When the teacher has volunteers show their work on the Devil/ Angel technique at the front of the class, students have to *speak* their arguments as part of the *representation* of the decision-

making process. The other students, as audience members, have to *view* the drama, which includes *listening* to the arguments. Afterwards, when the activity is debriefed, students *speak* and *listen* during the class discussion. If the teacher chooses, the drama can then be used as a catalyst for *writing* a diary entry of the main character, an alternate ending to the story that would have happened if the character made a different choice, a poem or play about difficult decisions, a letter to the main character to help him/her with his/her decision, a personal reflection about the issues behind the character's decision, an anecdote about a major decision in the student's life and the cycle continues. Because responding to literature using Process Drama requires all the language arts to be employed in naturally interrelated ways at some point in the process, process drama gives students opportunities to become more proficient in all the language arts, thus making them more experienced with all aspects of language learning.

During the action research, using the Process Drama methods brought Participants to similar conclusions about how drama links the language arts as my experiences brought me. Participant A called the drama portion of representing "a crucial part" of E.L.A., and asserted, "Drama can be used, in some aspects, in teaching the other five [language arts]....It supports and enhances each of the other five [language arts]" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 18). Participant B said, "I really do see drama as a real link, and a fusion between all of them [the language arts]... It could be like the core that spins around through all the rest of them" (Unpublished raw data 6, p. 8).

If drama is "like the core" through all the language arts, and the goal of teaching Language Arts is to make sure students are "prepared to meet new literacy demands in Canada and the international community" (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 1), then it follows

that Process Drama in E.L.A. classrooms can make important contributions to literacy development. Participant B echoed my thoughts when she stated, "I think it [drama] plays an integral part in literacy" (Unpublished raw data 6, p. 3).

I believe that drama's links to literacy begin long before children are in Grades 6-9 as in our study – even earlier than elementary school when they first explore oral language and dramatic play. Wagner (1998) supports this opinion when she alludes to and extends an earlier idea of Moffett's, "Oral language is commonly held to be the seedbed for later growth in literacy. Drama has been advocated as a way to develop not only oral language facility and the acquisition of standard dialect, but reading and writing as well" (p. 34).

In a November 1998 version of the English Language Arts program of studies, under the title *Emphasis Shifts*, the following points are found in a sub-section entitled "Early Literacy":

> · children begin to develop literacy skills long before they enter school-rich fund of prior knowledge
> · early experiences continue to influence language learning
> · such diversity must be honored. (Alexander & Babiuk, 1998, p.7)

To what type of literacy skills are they referring? It is my belief that early literacy refers to the kind of literacy skills I teach my own infant daughter, or my nieces or nephews. When I "read" a picture book to my daughter, I make the animal noises and actions. I am representing the animals. When I improvise stories with my niece and nephew, I am role-playing and so are they. Children explore language in their natural dramatic play. When children play house, or doctor, or any such mirroring of the adult world, they take on roles and explore the language as they have heard it used. By doing so, they begin to understand their own world, and represent their thoughts and feelings through dramatic

forms. Also, children take stories they have heard, and explore them dramatically at playtime. They naturally demonstrate connection to and understanding of literature they have heard; they way they play with stories is much like how we use Process Drama with older children. For instance, small children will take characters from a favourite book and place them in new settings or new situations. Essentially, by doing this, they are exploring the concept of character and showing that they understand their favourite characters. If a child knows how to weave a new story around a character, he/she understands that character. Children's play is often a series of Out-scenes. A quote from Neelands (1992) clarifies this further for me as follows: "Though imaginary, the exploration [the drama] can be experienced and shared as if it were real" (p. 3). When children create their own worlds in play, those worlds become very real to them. Neelands contends, "It is this 'realness' of drama, in which role-players give and receive (write and read) each other's messages simultaneously, which makes drama a unique form of literacy" (p. 6). At least in the case of early literacy, drama is an integral part that serves as the foundation upon which later language learning is built.

When Neelands calls drama a form of literacy, he makes a bold statement. It is a bold statement that rings true to me somewhere inside me. Yet, even with everything we have learned in this study, I do not have enough information to quite support that claim.[9] I wish I could, but I have to heed the warning of a drama educator whom I greatly admire. Heathcote warned, "So much is falsely claimed in the name of drama that it will be wise to take a close look at what it can do." (1984, p. 138).

Participant C made a bold statement of her own when she was talking about the

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[9] Pellegrini, as discussed in Wagner (1998), notes that, "Drama convincingly *correlates* with literacy skills" rather than actually showing a causal relationship (p. 195).

role drama plays in literacy and said, "One doesn't work without the other" (Unpublished raw data 5, p. 18). Participant A immediately disagreed. Even I am not sure you could argue that statement effectively. However, it shows me that Participant C felt very strongly about drama as a way to help her students become more literate. We never resolved that issue in the meeting, but left it as a difference of opinion. Part of me believes that you cannot have literacy without drama, but there are many people who have never had any dramatic experiences since childhood play who are educated citizens, who fit even my definition of literacy thus: They are able to read and write, connect what they read to previous and/or personal knowledge, understand literature beyond superficial levels, apply what has been understood, and are desirous to study and comprehend literature. They may be missing part of my definition – the ability to represent to explore and express their thoughts and feelings through dramatic or other visual forms – but no one who had all the other aspects of that definition in place would be considered anything less than literate by the general public.

So, at this time, I cannot claim that drama is a form of literacy in and of itself. Instead, I have to look at " what it *can* [my emphasis] do" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 138). The experiences of the action research team have shown what Process Drama in E.L.A. can do for literacy. Process Drama *can* be an academic activity that can enhance learning for students with various personalities from shy to outgoing, well behaved to challenging, and for exceptional students from both ends of that spectrum. The action research team perceived that drama *can* benefit students by giving them an alternate outlet to express their thoughts and feelings, by motivating them and helping them experience success, and by enhancing their understanding of literature. Drama *can* link the language arts, and

make them whole as they should be. Similarly, my best friends give me an outlet to express my thoughts and feelings, motivate me and help me experience success, and enhance my understanding of myself and others around me. They make me whole. The parallels are clear to me: Drama does for literacy what my best friends do for me. Therefore, Process Drama *can* be called literacy's new best friend. Yes, literacy can exist without Process Drama, and I can exist without my best friends, but now that we have discovered our relationships, why would we want to?

Our action research team has agreed that Process Drama is literacy's new best friend. Because of that belief, I find it difficult to see drama as merely a small part of representing. Just as the curriculum was expanded to add representing, perhaps it could be expanded to show more clearly drama's special relationship to literacy. In the November 1998 Program of Studies update, examples of representing are given. These include charts, posters, diagrams, photographs, dioramas and drama (p. 13). Clearly, this study has shown that Process drama alone contributes much more to literacy than any of those other examples. To even compare the possible learning from making a diorama to what we have shown to be possible through Process Drama seems impossible to me. The 2000 English Language Arts document states, "Viewing and representing are integral parts of contemporary life. These skills allow students to understand the ways in which images and language may be used to convey ideas, values, and beliefs" (Alberta learning, 2000, p. 3). It follows, therefore, that to live in our current society, students should not only be able to understand the ways in which images and language may be used, but they should be able to use them. Drama is not the only aspect of this, but it is an important part. In light of what this study has shown, and the fact that viewing and representing are

already considered to be "integral" parts of contemporary life, the curriculum should reflect that.

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER STUDY

## *Implications for Education and Educators*

This study holds implications for teacher education, the language arts curriculum, E.L.A. teachers, and professional development of those teachers. If it is accepted that drama not only enhances the teaching and learning of the language arts, but is closely linked to literacy in that it links the language arts and facilitates integrated language learning, or even if it is simply accepted that our study showed the many benefits of using drama as a tool to teach English Language Arts, professional development opportunities will likely need to be created for practicing teachers.

Because of the benefits of using Process Drama in E.L.A. classrooms, teacher education for E.L.A. teachers should include a course to teach the theory and practice of using it in their classrooms.

Furthermore, I feel that the curriculum should be expanded to reflect what has been shown in this study – drama is more than a small part of representing. Perhaps it could be considered the seventh language art; however, that is something for future study.

## *Opportunities for Further Study*

While analyzing my data, I discovered several ideas for companion studies to this Action Research.

There are several quantitative studies that could be conducted to further corroborate our findings. Being teachers, the participants in this study judged their own successes with Process Drama by their perceptions of their students' reactions to the experience. However, it would be interesting to design a quantitative study that would test students' actual learning. One approach would be to compare test scores on similar

questions asked with and without the use of Process Drama. Also, it would be interesting to collect quantitative data to explore the idea that Process Drama enhances students' understanding of literature. Again, this would likely have to be done using some type of tests that were administered to examine students' ability to interpret literature after using drama as well as without drama. Another quantitative study could be to determine if there are gender differences in who benefits from process drama, which gender enjoys it more or participates more fully.

There are also some qualitative studies that could further inform our research. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study as this one, but from the students' points of view. Another possible study, also from the students' points of view, could explore the idea that drama helps students visualize what they read. I would also be interested in conducting a study to explore the students lived experiences of learning E.L.A. through drama, where drama was a daily part of the class. Another idea that surfaced during our discussions on different types of learners benefiting from drama was to do a study on how drama is experienced by the range of students from exceptional to exceptional and every learner in-between. Additionally, the research question, "In what ways does Process Drama affect student writing when it is used as a catalyst?" could be explored. Finally, a study to investigate the role of drama in early literacy would also be fascinating. There are many possibilities for future research.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

When representing, the sixth language art, with its inclusion of drama, was added to the E.L.A. curriculum, it validated what I was already doing in my classroom. Yet, I knew many teachers who had never used drama in their classrooms. Thus, I wanted to study the implementation of drama into language arts Grades 6 – 9 classes with other professionals with the intent of informing pedagogical practices, and in the spirit of action research, produce a change in those practices. I focused on Process drama, as my own experience had shown me its potential to connect the language arts and achieve the integrated teaching of the language arts mandated by the 2000 curriculum document. Further to this, I wanted to explore the connections between Process Drama and literacy.

Three teacher participants and I formed the action research team, and we planned, acted, observed, and reflected through four action research spirals. We then reconnected a year after those spirals ended to see if their pedagogical practices had been changed in a lasting way.

The participant's E.L.A. teaching practices had changed, and all the participants planned to use Process Drama in their future E.L.A. classes. We illustrated that teachers, even with little or no previous drama experience, could successfully use Process Drama to teach E.L.A.

The participants in the study gained confidence in using the methods throughout the course of the study, and even started to transfer the techniques they learned to other genres of literature and different lessons than originally used. Moreover, participants began to find new ways to use Process Drama, creating their own methods and lessons. Participating in this collaborative action research study broadened the participants'

definitions of drama. Moreover, the study led the team to many noteworthy observations.

During the study, we came to realize that drama activities are just as academically rigorous as any other E.L.A. activities. Moreover, with the right teacher attitudes, management procedures, and progression of Process Drama techniques, we observed that Process Drama could be successful for a wide range of students. Finally, teachers perceived many benefits to their students when they taught literature through Process Drama.

The significance of the study went beyond the obvious. Certainly it is wonderful that the teachers involved and their students (during the study and in the future) benefited from the study. Yet, many other teachers will benefit indirectly from this study. The teachers involved have been disseminating this research to friends and colleagues right from the outset. The study has truly "taken on a life of its own." For example, one participant was "mentoring a new teacher to our school…mentioned some of these [Process Drama] activities…so now she, too, is using these and incorporating them, and, therefore, it [the study] is something that grows" (Unpublished raw data 7, p.8). This growth is the ultimate proof of the success of this study.

It was particularly significant that our study clearly showed that drama not only links the language arts, but also has the potential to be much more than a small part of the sixth language art, representing. Process Drama really is literacy's new best friend, and I hope that this study will encourage English Language Arts teachers to let drama and literacy work together to benefit their own classes.

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## APPENDIX E

### Final Interview Questions

1. Did anything change about your confidence level using drama in your L.A. classroom after the study? (even if you were confident before...)

2. Do you believe that drama is a motivating factor in your classroom and why?/ why not?
    b. Was it a motivation for difficult students?
    c. How did it affect shyer students?

3. Has your definition of Drama broadened? In what way(s)? (i.e. More to it than performance, use of D.I.E./ process drama)

4. Would you call drama activities in the L.A. classroom academic activities? Why/why not?

5. How do students perceive the activities from your observations?
    b. Did their perceptions change during the study?

6. Carol said in one of the meetings, "So that's what I'm looking for -legitimate ways that I can introduce drama and bring it in so the kids can take it seriously and there's a real value to it." Comment on this in light of our work.

7. Of the techniques you used, which was your favourite technique and why?

8. How do you feel your background knowledge of and experience (or lack thereof) with drama come to bear on your participation in this study?
    b. What advice would you give to teachers with no prior experience in drama who are attempting to include the drama/mime component of Representing in their teaching?

9. Did you use process drama in your teaching before this experience?
    b. How often have you used process drama in your class since our final group meeting?
    c. Do you plan to use it in the future?

10.. Have you found new ways to use Process Drama on your own? If so, can you give me some examples?

11. What were the challenges in participating in this AR study?

12. What do you feel were the benefits of participating in this action research study?

13. What were the benefits to your students in participating? Are there ongoing

benefits?

14. How do you define literacy?
    b.Does drama have a place in your definition?

## APPENDIX F

### Sample Rules for Drama

*(Note: I find it helpful to set the rules myself, but it can be done democratically with the group. Most groups will create similar rules to the ones found below.)*

1. Try your best and participate.

2. Consider the physical and emotional safety of yourself and others.

3. Keep language and content appropriate for the classroom. (I say: "No sex, drugs, alcohol, potty humor, or violence, please.)

4. Keep the text in mind.

5. Be positive and encouraging – no heckling, put-downs, or name-calling.

6. No one owns anything. Once shown, the performance is the property of the group, so there is no need to be defensive.

**APPENDIX G**

**Sentence Survivor Lesson Plan**

**TEACHER PREPARATION**

- cut up pieces of manilla tag to use for your phrases/clauses/ etc.
-cut some smaller ones for punctuation and longer ones for independent clauses.
-decide on your "game show host" persona

**STUDENT LEARNER EXPECTATIONS**

**Students should be able to:**

-make up subjects, verb phrases, noun phrases, independent clauses, and subordinate clauses.

-know all the types of punctuation needed for sentences.

-put the parts together to make logical, complete sentences.
-take on the role of game show contestant and respond to teacher-in-role.

**MATERIALS**

-cut up manilla tag
- big, black markers

**ACTIVITIES**

CLASS # 1: Break up the students into groups of three-four. Each group has to make up and NEATLY and CLEARLY PRINT the following on loose-leaf paper:

-four subjects (one pronoun per group –teacher makes sure all subject pronouns are covered.) / four verb phrases (one verb "to be" per group)/ four noun phrases (to be objects)/ two conjunctions (one subordinating and one coordinating)/four independent clauses/ and four dependent clauses.

-Once YOU have checked their spelling, etc., the students can write their ideas on manilla strips. Also, if you want to mark these, you can take in their planning sheets.

-explain the rules of the game and break the students into five Competition groups.

CLASS # 2(and maybe 3): Teacher-in-role: teacher welcomes students to the show. (You can ham this up.) Tell the students that they have been chosen from the smartest people in Canada to be the Sentence Survivors. Only one team will survive the sentence challenges. You could even have a quiz the next day and the winning team gets immunity from the quiz or something. Encourage role-play within the game. Have teams pick a team name.

ROUND 1 –Make a simple sentence. Group 1 makes sentence and receives two points if it is correct. If it is wrong, group 2 makes a sentence and the rest is as follows: remaining groups have to answer questions about the parts of speech of that sentence and/or which part is the simple subject/predicate and/or which part is the complete subj./predicate. If these groups answer correctly, they receive one point. (Teacher makes up questions

based on the sentence at hand.) This is a review of the parts of speech as well as subject/predicate. You can also ask if it is Declarative, Interrogative, Imperative or Exclamatory if you wish to review that, too. Continue until each team has made one simple sentence. STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING TO OTHER TEAMS AS YOU MAY PICK UP THINGS THAT WILL HELP YOU WIN.

RULE: When making sentences the teams have one minute maximum and can work together. When answering, they can discuss for 10 seconds, and then have one person answer the question.

ROUND 2 - compound sentence (as above). This round, have each team create a compound sentence for two points if correct. The teacher will ask that team about the sentence and if they cannot answer it, the next team can steal it for one point. You could ask the first team for the definition of the compound sentence. OR you can do it like above.

ROUND 3 – complex sentences. This round, each team has to make a complex sentence for two points if correct. The other teams can each ask the team who made it one question. If the team that made the sentence gets the question right, they get one point. If they don't, and the asking team knows the answer, the asking team gets the point.

ROUND 4 – FREE FOR ALL This round, each team makes up any sentence they want, and asks each of the other teams a question about it. If the other team is correct, they get the point, if they are wrong, the asking team gets the point.

ROUND 5 – optional - you can do a double jeopardy-type round where the teacher makes a sentence and asks teams questions on it.

**EVALUATION**

*Formative:*

Were students able to:
-make up subjects, verb phrases, noun phrases, independent clauses, and subordinate clauses.

-know all the types of punctuation needed for sentences.
-put the parts together to make logical, complete sentences.
-take on the role of game show contestant and respond to teacher-in-role.
-answer most questions correctly.

*Summative*: You can give a quiz/test on the material a day or so after the game.

## APPENDIX H

### Tableau Notes

Definition: A frozen picture in time. It is a moment cut out from the action of a story, novel, play, etc.

- A posed picture of a family, with the mother and father and children standing nice and smiling pretty for the camera is not a tableau. It is too posed.
-a tableau is raw material that I could see if I stepped into the room as something was going on and froze that scene.
-There MUST be dramatic tension in the tableaux.
    -ex: If you are watching an emotional, dramatic scene in a movie and you press pause, what is on the screen is a tableau.

Sets of tableaux are useful to show the main points of a story.

-The dramatic tension in the tableaux ensure that they tell a story, and are not just a series of pictures. In other words, each tableau should have all of the emotion of the action from which the frozen picture was taken.

Techniques

-strong body positions (no one has his/her back to the audience and everyone can be seen by the audience) and use of different levels will help to make the story more clear and give the audience something interesting to look at to hold their attention.
-Pay attention to EVERY detail including facial expressions, how each person's hands are posed, etc.
-make sure everyone in the tableau is involved in the story.

# APPENDIX I

## Sample Debriefing Questions

*Note: Many teachers use this technique after lessons, whether they call it debriefing or not. These are sample questions rather than an exhaustive list. Depending upon what the students say, the teacher will know what questions to ask, and how to ask questions building on student answers.*

For Teacher-in-Role:

1. How did you feel when I became *Character Name*?

2. Which lines said by the character seemed to fit the text? What textual clues brought you to that conclusion?

3. Were there any lines the character said that did not seem to fit the text? What were they, and what textual clues brought you to that conclusion? *(Note: With older grades, it is useful to throw in a line that is not supported by the text to see if students can recognize it.)*

4. (*if a role for students is required*) How did you "get into" your role? What made it easy? What made it difficult?

For Tableaux:

1. How did you know which plot points were the most important ones to represent?

2. (*to each participant*) What was your character thinking during the first/second/third tableau?

3. What are the benefits of viewing the plot?

For Figurative Physicals:

1. How did your drama work affect/ change your understanding of the poem and its figurative language?

2. Does one have to understand a poem completely before "putting it on its feet?"

3. Would this technique work with all poems? Why or why not? What types of poems would work/ not work and why?

For Devil/ Angel or Conscience:

1. What is difficult about playing the Angel? The Devil? The person making the decision?

2. In what ways did your preparation before the activity help you?

3. What mental process does this technique bring to life?

For Hot Seats:

1. How did you feel on the Hot Seat?

2. How do you ensure that you are representing the character as he/she is in the text?

3. (*to those watching*) Did you learn anything about the character you didn't know after reading the text? What?

General Questions for various Process Drama activities:

1. What do you believe was the most important lesson learned in this activity? Why did you choose that lesson?

2. What was different for you between experiencing the character/text/plot and reading the text?

3. What was the most difficult aspect of this activity? Why? What did you do about that?

# APPENDIX J

## Process Drama: Sample Evaluation Tools

### 1. General Process Drama Rubric

Made on: RubiStar ( http://rubistar.4teachers.org )

| CATEGORY | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Speaks Clearly** | Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words. | Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word. | Speaks clearly and distinctly most ( 94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no more than one word. | Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more than one word. |
| **Volume** | Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation. | Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time. | Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time. | Volume often too soft to be heard by all audience members. |
| **Content** | Shows a full understanding of the topic. | Shows a good understanding of the topic. | Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic. | Does not seem to understand the topic very well. |
| **Props** | Student uses several props (could include costume) that show considerable work/creativity and which make the presentation better. | Student uses 1 prop that shows considerable work/creativity and which make the presentation better. | Student uses 1 prop which makes the presentation better. | The student uses no props OR the props chosen detract from the presentation. |
| **Collaboration with Peers** | Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep people working well together. | Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause "waves" in the group. | Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group but sometimes is not a good team member. | Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Often is not a good team member. |
| **Knowledge of the Literature** | Shows a full understanding of the literature. Uses several specific words, phrases, quotations, or details from the literature. | Shows a good understanding of the literature. Uses some specific words, phrases, quotations, or details from the literature. | Shows some understanding of the literature. but uses few specific words, phrases, quotations, or details from the literature. | Shows little understanding of the literature. and does not use specific words, phrases, quotations, or details from the literature. |

## 2. Tableau Evaluation Scale

**TABLEAUX IN GROUPS -- MARKS**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. LEVEL OF CONCENTRATION:** | **1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5** |
| **2. INTERESTING /INVENTIVE** | **1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5** |
| **3. CLEAR PICTURES/ STORY** | **1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5** |
| | **6 6.5 7 7.5 8 8.5 9 9.5 10** |
| **4. ATTENTION TO DETAIL** | **1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5** |

**COMMENTS:** **/25**

# APPENDIX K

## Groupwork -- Evaluation Form

**Made on RubiStar** - ( http://rubistar.4teachers.org )

| CATEGORY | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Contributions** | Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort. | Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard! | Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required. | Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate. |
| **Time-management** | Routinely uses time well throughout the project to ensure things get done on time. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination. | Usually uses time well throughout the project, but may have procrastinated on one thing. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination. | Tends to procrastinate, but always gets things done by the deadlines. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination. | Rarely gets things done by the deadlines AND group has to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's inadequate time management. |
| **Problem-solving** | Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems. | Refines solutions suggested by others. | Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others. | Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Lets others do the work. |
| **Attitude** | Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s). | Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task(s). | Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s). | Often is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Often has a negative attitude about the task(s). |
| **Focus on the task** | Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done. Very self-directed. | Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person. | Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on-task. | Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work. |
| **Monitors Group Effectiveness** | Routinely monitors the effectiveness of the group, and makes suggestions to make it more effective. | Routinely monitors the effectiveness of the group and works to make the group more effective. | Occasionally monitors the effectiveness of the group and works to make the group more effective. | Rarely monitors the effectiveness of the group and does not work to make it more effective. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Working with Others** | Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together. | Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group. | Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member. | Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player. |

**Your Name:** _____

**Project Name:** _____

**Directions**: Using the rubric, give each member of your group a FAIR mark. These forms must be completed individually and shown only to your teacher. This ensures that you may be completely honest on this form. Students' final grades will be an average of the marks they receive from other students. Use the comments section to explain anything relevant to the way you have marked your group, or how you believe you may be marked.

| *Group Member's Name* | *Contri-butions /4* | *Time-Manage ment /4* | *Problem-Solving /4* | *Attitude /4* | *Focus /4* | *Monitors Group Effective-ness /4* | *Working With others /4* | *Total /28* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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COMMENTS: _____